

JESUS AND THE
YOUNG MAN OF
TO-DAY

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JOHN M. HOLMES



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MAN OF TO-DAY



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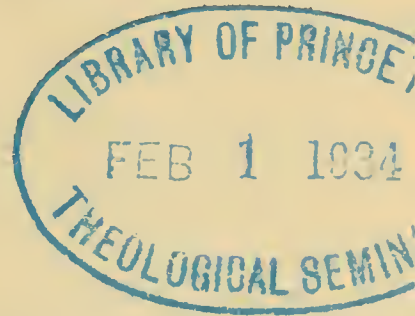
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Jesus and the Young Man of To-day

BY ✓

JOHN M. HOLMES



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PREFACE

For years, men have been drifting indifferently from the church because so many religious leaders insist upon reading into the Bible all the theological accretions and beliefs of the Christian church, until the actual life and teachings of Jesus are obscured.

Without becoming openly antagonistic, and in most cases, without even removing their names from the church register, these so-called "doubters" lose their interest in the church and in things religious.

The great world war which has recently closed put our doctrines, beliefs, and professions to a severe test with the result that many beliefs and customs which were previously considered very important were discarded and the manly qualities which Jesus emphasized in His teachings and exemplified in His life blazed forth with such splendor that they became the ideals of hundreds of men who had never openly professed to be followers of Him.

The studies are an outgrowth of experience in dealing with students and business men, Christian and non-Christian, who were in the throes of intellectual reconstruction. They were written primarily for the college student who, no longer able to accept his boyhood beliefs, seeks a restatement of faith which will meet the needs of his reason as well as of his heart. The writer does not attempt to set forth a complete life of Jesus and does not pretend to discuss the fundamentals of the Christian church. He lays no claim to originality. Quotations from authoritative writers are frequently inserted. The plan and much of the material of the studies are taken from "Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ," by E. I. Bosworth.

The writer would like to take this opportunity to thank the many kind friends who have read the manuscript and offered helpful suggestions. Dr. E. I. Bosworth, of Oberlin; Dr. M. H. Lichliter, of Cleveland; Dr. John C. French, of

the Johns Hopkins University; Sergeant Oliver M. Ainsworth, of the Medical Department, U. S. A.; Rev. F. A. Juhan, Mr. Allen J. Graham, Mr. B. E. Geer, and especially Mr. J. W. Norwood, of Greenville, S. C., by their kind assistance made it possible for the course to be published, although they are in no way responsible for the views expressed therein.

The writer also wishes to thank the publishers, especially the Association Press, and Charles Scribner's Sons, who have granted permission to use the many quotations which appear throughout the book.

J. M. H.

Greenville, S. C., February 14th, 1919.

INTRODUCTION

Four men, after a long, arduous climb, came to the top of a high mountain, overlooking a broad valley. The first man was a geologist. In his description of the valley, he told of the kind of rock and soil, the various strata, and the geologic movements which produced the present shape of the valley.

The second man was a surveyor. He approximated the length and breadth of the valley, the miles of winding road, the probable width of the river, and the time it would take to cross from mountain to mountain.

The third man was a farmer. He told of the amount of timberland, the approximate number of acres in corn, pasture, and meadow, and of the suitability of the valley for farming.

The fourth man was a poet. As he stood on the mountain top, he saw the grandeur of the scene stretching before him: the patches of green, and the squares of cultivated soil; the winding river reflecting in places the glancing rays of the declining sun; the long shadows cast by the higher mountains; then, far away in the distance, the interwoven hills covered by a hazy veil of blue forming a great wall against the sky. His description of the valley was a poem in which he tried to convey the impression which the grandeur of the scene made upon his mind.

Each of these descriptions was, in its own way, true. Each was based upon the same actual fact. The first three dealt with material or external facts; the fourth treated of a fact of inward experience.

Such is the case with the four gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke give an account of the teachings and life of the historical Jesus. John endeavors to give the impressions made upon his life by the Risen Christ. It is not the actual sayings of Jesus or the facts of His life which primarily interest the fourth evangelist, but the infinite significance of

the revelation in Christ. "We have [in this Gospel] a history which is meant to illustrate and support a given religious belief."¹

Then again, the Fourth Gospel turns, "not as in other records, on matters of Jewish custom and morality, but on doctrinal questions which first came under discussion at a later time. [In this Gospel], Jesus meets objections which the Jews bring forward against his unity with God, his pre-existence, the character of his Messianic work, the partaking of his flesh and blood, the apparent failure of his mission. [We have in the Gospel of John, then], not the conflict between Jesus and his enemies, but the conflict between Christianity and Judaism. . . . The real universalism of the Sermon on the Mount and the parable of the Good Samaritan gives place to a narrower message, in accordance with the idea of the church. There can be little question that the evangelist wrote consciously in the interest of this idea. Living at a time when the unity of the church was in danger, and when various abuses were creeping into its life and sacraments, he sought to remind it of its true character. He reads back into the gospel history the conditions of his own day, in order to submit them to the Master's judgment. . . . Under the form of a biography of Jesus it deals with problems and difficulties which did not arise until after his death."¹

Many of the most serious intellectual difficulties of our time arise from a misunderstanding of the essential character of the Fourth Gospel. It is placed—incorrectly, as the writer believes—in the same category with the Synoptic Gospels and interpreted as literal history. Attack almost any extremely orthodox belief and you will find the dogmatist, in support of his position, almost invariably quotes from the Gospel of John, trying to interpret the discourses found there as the actual words of Jesus. Its value, however, is not in its historical significance. "It holds a place of its own,—sacred and apart even among the books of the New Testament,—as the devotional Gospel, which has molded and nurtured the

¹ The Historical and Religious Value of the Fourth Gospel. E. F. Scott. Copyrighted 1909. Used by permission of the Pilgrim Press, Boston and Chicago.

Christian piety of all ages. The tradition which assigns it to a Beloved Disciple is true in essence, if not in literal fact. We can recognize in the unknown evangelist one who had entered into the inner secret of the life of Christ. He has taught us, out of his own deep experience, how the Master who departed long ago is still a living presence with those who love him; and Christian men have ever found in his Gospel the largest and tenderest expression of their personal faith. The language they have learned from it comes naturally to their hearts, when they hold their own communion with Christ." Finally, "we cannot understand what Jesus was, while he yet sojourned among men, until we learn to see him, with the fourth evangelist, in the eternal significance of his life."¹

We have thus four gospels, each with its own marked individuality. "The brief, simple, vivid narrative of Mark may be described as the popular, evangelistic gospel. It presents those dramatic personal facts in which the common people were intensely interested. It relegated to the background detailed teachings and doctrinal questions which concerned only the learned. Matthew is preëminently the teaching gospel. The prominence given to the teachings of Jesus and the topical arrangement of its material made it the manual that was most widely used in the early church for instruction regarding the work and teachings of Jesus. Luke is the humanitarian, social gospel. It makes sharp distinction between the rich and the poor, the ruling classes and the masses. It defines the fundamental obligations of the individual, not only to God, but to his fellow-men, in terms of love and sympathy and service. It is the gospel which presents most clearly Jesus' teachings regarding the way along which society must proceed in order to solve its social problems. The Fourth Gospel is the doctrinal gospel, for its avowed and dominant aim throughout is to establish the fundamental doctrines of the early church and to interpret in universal, philosophical terms the significance of Jesus' character and work."²

¹ The Historical and Religious Value of the Fourth Gospel. E. F. Scott. Copyrighted 1909. Used by permission of the Pilgrim Press. Boston and Chicago.

² The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

This book is to deal with the life and teachings of the historical Jesus. We wish to learn what He actually said and did, and to ascertain what foundation we have for our Christian faith.

There were two early manuscripts which were the principal sources of the life of Jesus. The one is the Gospel of Mark, and the other, whose exact contents are not known, is commonly known as Q (*quelle*, source). Mark is a narrative dealing with the events and incidents of the life of Jesus, while Q contained, for the most part, His teachings and sayings.

Accordingly, when Matthew and Luke wrote their gospels, they used Mark as the chief source of their historical narratives, Q as the chief source of the teachings of Jesus, and adding information gathered by themselves, adapted the whole to their purposes.¹

The logical way, then, to study the acts and teachings of Jesus, is not to try to harmonize the three gospels but to use Mark as a basis, and study in Matthew and Luke the material which Mark does not contain. This plan is followed in this book.

¹ *The Gospel History and Its Transmission.* F. C. Burkitt. T. and T. Clark. Edinburgh. The Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

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JESUS AND THE YOUNG MAN OF TO-DAY

STUDY I. FIRST DAY

Outline of the Gospel of Mark

Ask the average American schoolboy to sketch the life of George Washington, and usually he will give you the principal events of the life of Washington, beginning with his boyhood days, mentioning his heroic conduct at Fort Duquesne, telling about the battles he fought as leader of the Continental Army, describing his inauguration as president, and ending with his death at Mount Vernon. Here and there some incident will loom large, but the boy has a general mental picture of the life of Washington as a well-connected whole beginning with his boyhood days and moving forward to his death.

Ask the same boy to sketch the life of Jesus, and he does not think of the life of Jesus as an orderly, natural progression, but thinks of a series of disconnected incidents: the crucifixion, the feeding of the five thousand, the parable of the sower, or other events all disconnected or loosely joined together. Our study to-day is to emphasize the fact that the life of Jesus had a definite, progressive plan.

If you have time, read the Gospel of Mark. It will take about fifty-five minutes, or half as long as the time spent in watching an ordinary football game. You will notice that it begins with the public ministry of Jesus, the first thirteen verses constituting an introduction. In 1:14 Jesus appears in Galilee announcing the immediate approach of the Kingdom of God. His teaching meets with popular response until at the end of chapter one we find hearers "coming to him from every quarter." But soon His teaching conflicts

with the ideas of the religious leaders of the day. Jesus assumes the authority to forgive sins, He eats with publicans and sinners, and in 2: 18-22 intimates the overthrow of the existing religious institutions. When the opposition grows so strong that He realizes that the conflict will inevitably end in His death, Jesus withdraws from Galilee (7: 24), and concentrates His efforts upon His twelve followers in order that they may be prepared to carry on His work after the religious leaders of the nation had wreaked their vengeance on Him. In 11: 1 Jesus comes to Jerusalem for the passover, is seized, and crucified. 16: 1-20 is an account of the resurrection. An outline of the Gospel by Professor Kent in the Historical Bible, is as follows:

Introduction:

Summary of John's work and of Jesus' baptism and temptation, 1: 1-13.

A. Jesus' Work in Galilee, 1: 14-7: 23.

1. Beginning of his work of teaching and healing, 1: 14-45.
2. Growth of pharisaic opposition, 2: 1-3: 6.
3. The call of the Twelve, 3: 7-35.
4. The teaching by parables, 4: 1-34.
5. Confirmation of his authority by miracles, 4: 35-6: 13.
6. The fate of John the Baptist, 6: 14-29.
7. Miracles illustrating Jesus' power over nature, 6: 30-56.
8. Conflict with the scribes and Pharisees, 7: 1-23.

B. Jesus in Retirement with His Disciples, 7: 24-10: 52.

1. Miracles of healing, 7: 24-8: 26.
2. Revelation of his coming death, 8: 27-9: 32.
3. Glory through service, 9: 33-50.
4. The spirit of renunciation, 10: 1-31.
5. The rewards in the kingdom, 10: 32-45.
6. Healing the blind beggar at Jericho, 10: 46-52.

C. The Closing Scenes at Jerusalem, 11: 1-16: 8.

1. Assertion of his God-given authority, 11: 1-12: 12.
2. Teaching in the temple, 12: 13-44.
3. Warning of coming judgment, 13.
4. Events leading to the betrayal, 14: 1-52.

5. Peter's denial, 14: 53, 54, 65-72.

6. Jesus' trial and crucifixion, 14: 55-64, 15: 1-39.

7. The burial and the empty tomb, 15: 40-16: 8.

Epilogue: The resurrection experiences, 16: 9-20.¹

"New truth," says Dean Bosworth, "cannot be unloaded in an unprepared mind like furniture in an empty house. Remember that what took you a long time to understand and accept you cannot usually expect another to accept from you when you first attempt to share it with him. Be sure, too, that God has much to say to you that you are not yet able to hear. If we remember this we are often kept from intolerance and impatience."²

Study I. Second Day

The General Situation in Palestine

"1. The Political Situation.—Read Luke 3: 1-2. The Jews had been a part of the Roman Empire since 63 B. C., when the Romans, under Pompey, finding that the Sabbath-keeping Jews would not fight on the Sabbath day, raised their battering rams against the walls without risk on the Sabbath and captured the city (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 14: 4: 3). This capture of Jerusalem closed a century of struggle and independence in some respects the most brilliant of all Jewish history.

"The Romans governed the Jews through the Herods, a powerful family probably of Edomite origin (that is, descendants of Esau), who knew how to make themselves tolerable to the Jews and indispensable to the Romans. The most famous member of the family, Herod the Great, 'the splendid Arab'—a man of strong passions, dark vices, and large executive ability—had died shortly after the birth of Jesus. When Jesus entered public life several members of this famous family were holding governorships in districts of Pal-

¹ *The Life and Teachings of Jesus*. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

² *Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ*. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

estine, although Judea, in which Jerusalem was situated, was governed by Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator. The Jews enjoyed a reasonable degree of self-government, although the Romans saw to it that the highest office in the nation, the high priesthood, which had earlier been hereditary and held for life, was now filled by their own nominees and held during the pleasure of the Roman authorities.

“2. The Religious Situation.—The Jews were specialists in religion; the rabbis and priests were their most prominent citizens. The Jews inhabiting Palestine at this time were descendants of the comparatively small minority that had cared enough for religion to turn away from the business openings in Babylon and return from Babylonian captivity to Jehovah's temple in Palestine. The center of their religious system, at least in its popular aspects, had finally come to be the Messianic hope. It was expected that a king anointed of God would appear who should make them politically supreme in the world. He would found and administer ‘God's Kingdom,’ before which all other kingdoms would disappear or become subordinate. The Cæsars would one day come to Jerusalem with tribute! This hope gave the people life and vigor. Each springtime troops of pilgrims went singing up through the country to Jerusalem, looking askance at the Roman soldiers there and praying for the coming Kingdom. To this coming Messiah every man looked for the realization of his ideal. The so-called ‘Pharisee’ longed to see every Jew a scrupulous observer of Moses' Law; the Zealot highlander from Galilee longed to see the Roman out of the land; the average man longed for ‘better times,’ less work, better food and clothes and more of them; the Sadducean priests, whose chief interest was in the temple revenues, were probably satisfied with things as they were.

“3. The Industrial Situation.—Although the Palestinian Jews were a religious people, still, the money-making instinct which has been characteristic of the race in all ages, was strong in them. As will be seen later, Jesus had to make determined protest against this spirit which permeated even the religious leaders of the nation. Read Mark 12:40; Luke 16:14; Matt. 6:19–24. All through the Gospels the hum of business is heard. The sower, the fisherman, the pearl mer-

chant, the poor calculator who began to build and could not finish, the banker, the rich farmer, the steward, and the money-changer are figures that go busily about through the Gospel narrative.

"4. Greek Civilization.—Although the Jews had resisted the encroachment of Greek life more successfully than most nations, still Greek language and customs had entered largely into Palestine. Greek, as well as Aramaic (the current dialect of Hebrew), was spoken in the land, and there was a theater even in Jerusalem. Matt. 10:5 is an allusion to the foreigner in Palestine.

"5. The Situation in the World.—Slavery existed in brutal form, family life was decadent, human sympathy meager, philosophers were pessimistic. In Palestine and in the world at large it was an age of highly developed selfishness."¹ Yet underneath the selfishness and pessimism was an intense yearning for heart-satisfying truth and a longing for a divine virtue-making power.

6. "It was God's plan to introduce into this dark situation a single Life which, like a single clear true note, should draw all discordant elements into harmony. The New Order of things began with the introduction of that Life, its ideals and purposes. We instinctively date all events of human history with reference to the introduction of that Life; they happen either B. C. or A. D. Think to-day and every day during this study of your own relation to that Life. How ought it to affect your life to-day?"¹

Study I. Third Day

The General Situation in Palestine (concluded)

"Contrast Christ's day with ours. . . . We are educated, enlightened by the best thought of the past, the surest knowledge of the present; but His were an uneducated people, hardly

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

knew the schoolmaster, and where they did, received from him instruction that stunted rather than developed. We live in a present that knows the past and is enriched with all its mental wealth. . . . But Jesus lived in a present closed to every past, save the past of His own people. The common home-born Jew knew the Gentile but to despise him; the wisdom of Greece and Rome was to him but foolishness, best unknown; while the light that streamed from his own Scriptures could be seen only through the thick dark horn of rabbinical interpretation. We live in times when the world has grown wondrously wide and open to man; when nations beat in closest sympathy with each other; when the thoughts of one people swiftly become those of another; when commerce has so woven its fine network around the world that all its parts now feel connected and akin; but Jesus lived in a land which prided itself on its ignorance and hatred of the foreigner, where the thought of common brotherhood or kinship could only rise to be cast out and abhorred. In our day nature has been interpreted, the physical universe has become practically infinite in space and time, filling the soul with a sense of awe in its presence the earlier ages could not possibly have experienced; but in Christ's day and to His countrymen nature was but a simple thing, of small significance, with few mysteries. Ours is, indeed, a day that might well create a great man, a universal teacher, the founder of a new faith. Yet where is the person that thinks it possible for our historical conditions to create a Christ? . . . But if the creation of Christ transcends our historical conditions, was it possible to His own? Or does He not stand out so much their superior as to be, while a Child of time, the Son of the Eternal, the only Begotten who has descended to earth from the bosom of the Father, that He might declare Him?"¹

¹ Studies in the Life of Christ. A. M. Fairbairn. Used by permission of the D. Appleton and Company. New York.

*Study I. Fourth Day***John the Baptist. Mark 1:1-8; Matt. 3:1-12;
Luke 3:3-18**

The Gospel of Mark has no account of the birth and childhood of Jesus. After a brief introduction, it proceeds immediately with His public life. It brings quickly before us the rough, fearless, ascetic John the Baptist, with his startling message; briefly mentions the temptation, and introduces us to Jesus in Galilee, where he is announcing that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

The phrase, "the Son of God," in v. 1, did not occur in the earliest manuscripts and vv. 2-3 are also thought to be a later insertion. Read Mark 1:1-8.

The first chapter of Luke gives an account of the early days of John the Baptist. In training, dress, and message he reminds us of Amos, the shepherd prophet of Israel's prosperity. He "looks at a distance," says Dean Bosworth, "like the figure of a dervish from the desert such as may sometimes be seen in the streets of Cairo or Jerusalem to-day. His uncut Nazarite's hair, destined one day to be clotted with his own life blood, grows long; his cloak is of coarse hair-cloth; a leather strap, not a sash, is around his waist, and he has adopted the diet of the ascetic of the desert."¹

John probably visited, as Amos did, the large centers of population at the time of the important religious festivals, and was made heartsick by the religious hypocrisy and oppression of the cities.

Soon, however, the conviction grew in the mind of John that the time was near when God would redeem the people of Israel. Surely the price had been paid for the apostasy of the nation. It was now seven hundred and fifty-four years since the fall of Samaria and six hundred and twenty since the destruction of Jerusalem. Had not the prophetic voice of the spokesman of God sounded even five hundred

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

years ago, "Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and entreat the favor of Jehovah."

As he brooded and thought on these Messianic sermons, the conviction became an intense inward fire, and John emerged from the wilderness to stir and prepare the nation for the immediate coming of the Messiah. Read Mark 1:1-8.

Study I. Fifth Day

**The Message of John. Mark 1:2-8; Matt. 3:1-12;
Luke 3:3-18**

During the generations in which the Jewish people endured oppression and national slavery, there was nourished in their breasts the hope of the coming Messiah. As the persecution grew more severe and the appearance of the Messiah was longer delayed, the conviction grew deeper and the hope more intense of the ultimate triumph of the Messiah when he did come. It is no wonder then, that the rough prophet of the wilderness resembling the prophets of old, created a stir in the land as he called the nation to prepare for the quickly approaching Kingdom. His message was primarily the nearness of the Messianic demonstration. "Repent!" thundered the summons, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The news spread like wildfire. Crowds began to gather at the Jordan from all sections. The religious leaders of the nation sent a deputation to investigate this rough messenger of the wilderness.

The second part of the message of John dealt briefly with the work of the Messiah. He was to come like the orchard keeper who goes through the orchard examining the trees. Those which are unfruitful are to be chopped down and cast into the fire. Those which are good are to be pruned and saved. Or he was to be like the wheat sifter who had trampled the wheat upon the hard earthen threshing floor, and who now with the winnowing shovel was beginning to throw the jumbled mass into the air for the wind to blow the chaff

to one side for burning, while the wheat falling to the floor was to be gathered into the barn.

John's idea of the Messiah was that of a righteous judge who would bring the nation to judgment and administer justice relentlessly; prosperity to the righteous, condemnation to the wicked. We shall study later the idea of Jesus of the Messianic Kingdom, and shall realize that the disappointment of John in Jesus was perfectly natural in view of their divergent Messianic ideals. Read Matthew 3: 1-12 and try to imagine the hubbub and turmoil which the striking dress, the fearlessness, and the stirring message of John the Baptist produced in Israel in A. D. 26.

Study I. Sixth Day

The Early Life of Jesus. Luke 2: 39-52

The accounts of the early life of Jesus are very brief. We can only conjecture that He received such education in the home and in the synagogue schools as was afforded the Jewish boys of His day. This limited training was almost entirely religious and instilled into the growing boy a strong racial pride.

The home of Jesus was in Nazareth in Galilee, away from the more hidebound, oppressive ecclesiastical atmosphere of Jerusalem. "The country about Nazareth," says Dean Bosworth, "was in its educational influence historically for the Jewish boy much what the country about Boston is for an American boy. If the village teacher was a man of any imagination he must have spent afternoons of rare interest with his schoolboys on the Nazareth hilltops."¹ "You cannot see from Nazareth the surrounding country, for Nazareth rests in a basin among the hills; but the moment you climb to the edge of this basin, which is everywhere within the limit of the village boy's playground, what a view you have! Esdraelon lies before you, with its twenty battle-fields—the scenes of Barak's and Gideon's victories, the scenes of

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

Saul's and Josiah's defeats, the scenes of the struggles for freedom in the glorious days of the Maccabees. There is Naboth's vineyard and the place of Jehu's revenge upon Jezebel; there Shunem and the house of Elisha; there Carmel and the place of Elijah's sacrifice. To the east the Valley of Jordan, with the long range of Gilead; to the west the radiance of the Great Sea, with the ships of Tarshish and the promise of the Isles. You see thirty miles in three directions. It is a map of Old Testament history. But equally full and rich was the present life on which the eyes of the boy Jesus looked out. . . . For all the rumor of the Empire entered Palestine close to Nazareth—the news from Rome, about the Emperor's health, about the changing influence of the great statesmen, about the prospects at court of Herod, or of the Jews; about Cæsar's last order concerning the tribute, or whether the policy of the Procurator would be sustained. . . . A vision of all the kingdoms of the world was as possible from this village as from the mount of temptation.”¹

Study I. Seventh Day

Review

Review to-day the work of the last six days. Remember we are not attempting to prove the existence of God, or to define the Holy Spirit or its mission. We merely state that the record tells us that in a certain nation nineteen hundred years ago a man named John appeared preaching to the people that the long expected time had arrived when God was to establish His Kingdom on earth. The chosen representative of God would appear who would separate the evil from the good, proclaimed this herald, and who would stir the soul of the nation by the very fire of God Himself. Let us assume for the time being that God exists.

Consider these questions for this week:

1. In view of the moral conditions in Palestine in A. D. 26 did the appearance of Jesus seem opportune?

¹ Historical Geography of the Holy Land. G. A. Smith, D.D., I.L.D. Used by permission of the George H. Doran Company, Publishers, New York.

2. Are you excusing your lack of moral courage in battling with the immoral or unmoral conditions of your college, your fraternity, or athletic group by saying the time is inopportune for such an advance?

3. Jesus spent thirty years in preparation for a three years' task. It is evident from His public life that He was prepared to meet any emergency because He had always performed humble duties thoroughly. He did each task as if it were the supreme thing in life.

The factors which determine primarily the success of a nation in war are the ideals, character, physical stamina, and thrift of the people during peace.

STUDY II. FIRST DAY

The Baptism of Jesus. Mark 1:9-11; Matt. 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-22

For years, there had been gradually growing in the mind of Jesus the firm conviction that the religious leaders of His day had an utter misconception of the Messianic Kingdom. No doubt He discussed His views with many sincere rabbis whenever the opportunity arose, but found their minds clouded by current superstitions and tradition. The very unresponsiveness of the people to whom he talked made Jesus realize more intensely the need for some one to give to the nation the correct idea of the coming Kingdom. Perhaps, one day, in the quiet and stillness of solitude there came to His soul the feeling that God had chosen Him for this mission, and that He Himself was the chosen Messiah of God to inaugurate the Kingdom. This consciousness of His divine mission gradually grew in the mind of Jesus, until it reached complete realization at the time of His baptism.

"Rumors of what was going on in the Jordan valley reached Nazareth. Perhaps in the cool of the day from the Nazareth hilltop, Jesus often looked down the green valley of Jezreel towards the Jordan. There came a day when He put His shop in order, looked back upon it from the door for the last time, and joined the crowds listening to the fiery appeals of the wilderness prophet."¹

Jesus and John evidently knew each other and the Baptizer had recognized in his carpenter cousin from Nazareth a nature deeper and truer than his own. It is of little wonder then that John reluctantly baptized Jesus. Read the account

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

in Mark 1:9-11 and the parallel accounts in Matthew and Luke.

We must realize that Jesus was so infinitely above His disciples that, although sincere, their untrained minds were unable to grasp quickly the significance of His life and mission. Many of the deeper experiences of His life and much of His teaching, Jesus gave, therefore, in parable, for stories are easily retained in the memory. In after years, with the adequate perspective of His completed life, these stories would be recalled and the disciples would then be able to understand the facts, principles, or experiences underlying them. This, it seems to the writer, is evidently the case in the account of the baptism and the temptation.

Baptism probably meant to Jesus, the identification of Himself with those expecting immediately the coming Kingdom. As He walked into the water, there came flooding into His soul an absolute confirmation of the consciousness of His divine mission and God the Father spoke to the heart of His especially chosen one, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."

The writer does not believe that an actual dove descended or that an audible voice spoke. These are parts of the parable with which Jesus clothed this experience. A camera would not have shown the dove, neither would a dictagraph have recorded the words. As James Denny expresses it in "The Death of Christ," "The sum of that experience is often put by saying that He came then to the consciousness of His Sonship. . . . A voice from heaven does not mean a voice from the clouds but a voice from God; and it is important to notice that the voice from God speaks in familiar Old Testament words."

Study II. Second Day

**The Temptation of Jesus. Mark 1:12-13; Matt.
4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13**

A man is standing on the top of one of the giant "skyscrapers" of New York viewing that great city. He turns

to a companion and asks, "If you wanted to make this city a city of God and establish the Kingdom of God here, what would you do?"

The companion answers, after a moment's thought, "I would clean up those tenements; I would reduce street-car fares to relieve that tenement congestion and let those laborers live in the country. I would raise the wages of working girls. I would wipe out the vice districts; and drive out the grafting and corrupt politicians. I would Americanize those foreigners. I would prosecute every one who preyed upon the poor. I would tear down those Fifth Avenue palaces, open only a month or two in a year, and make playgrounds for the children. I would have cleaner streets and better sanitation. I would give every man a fair chance and then I should have a city of God."

"I doubt it," replies the first speaker, "for if you didn't clean up the hearts of those people, you would probably have as much of hell as before, notwithstanding your improved conditions. Most of that suffering is caused by the sin and selfishness within men."

Having reached a full realization of His divine mission at the baptism, Jesus retired into the wilderness to face the great questions, "What kind of Kingdom does my Father want me to establish, How shall it be established, and How shall it be inaugurated?"

Read Mark 1: 12-13 and the more complete account in Matthew 4: 1-11.

In the first temptation, Jesus was tempted to make His Kingdom minister to the material needs of men and to spend His life relieving the oppressive social conditions of His day. He was tempted to abolish slavery and unjust taxation and to build a city of God in Jerusalem, as our friend on the "skyscraper" would have done in New York. A nature such as Jesus' must have suffered at the sight of so much hunger and destitution. He must have burned with indignation when He saw the weak trodden under foot by the strong. But Jesus saw that the real distress of men was not physical but spiritual. His Kingdom was not to change environment but to change the inward lives of men; not to make good conditions, except incidentally, but to make good men; not to bring

about reforms but to make reformers, and these reformed men would remake conditions around them. Men needed above everything else to know God and to come into relationship with Him. "For men do not live by bread alone but by the words which proceed out of the mouth of God."

As Dean Bosworth expresses it, "He saw that God's ideal for His Kingdom . . . involved the bringing of men into friendly intercourse with God, no matter how long it might take, and in this way securing a race of brotherly men among whom there would be no longer hunger and suffering. He would not simply treat the symptoms of the disease but would by a longer process remove the deep-seated disease that caused the symptoms. . . . The supreme aim of His Kingdom should be, not first and chiefly physical comforts for men, though these were involved, . . . But the supreme feature of the Kingdom and the source of all other features would be friendship with God and man. There should be a race of brotherly sons of God."¹

This, to the mind of the writer, is the explanation of the first temptation. Jesus was tempted to make His Kingdom primarily one of material relief and not spiritual blessing. His decision, however, was not to make stones into bread but to give men the words from the mouth of God.

Of course, in these temptations, the writer does not believe that the devil actually appeared in bodily form, or that Jesus went to the pinnacle of the temple, or that He saw all the kingdoms of the world from an exceeding high mountain. These are the parabolic settings in which Jesus gave the account of this experience to His disciples.

The meaning of the first temptation for us is expressed in the lines,

"God hath not promised
Skies ever blue,
Flower-strewn pathways
Always for you.

"God hath not promised
Sun without rain,

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

Peace without sorrow,
Joy without pain.

“But God hath promised
Strength from above,
Unfailing sympathy,
Undying love.”

Study II. Third Day

The Temptation of Jesus (concluded)

After determining the kind of Kingdom His Father wanted Him to establish, the next question Jesus faced was, “How shall I inaugurate this Kingdom?”

In answering this question, let us continue to use a modern parallel. If a man were to attempt to establish the Kingdom of God in New York City to-day, he would probably map out a systematic campaign of advertising. Printed matter would be widely distributed and press agents would be kept busy. A great parade would be arranged and an immense mass meeting would be held in Carnegie Hall. In short, he would attempt to popularize the Kingdom by some novel form of advertising and would perhaps secure a good start by some spectacular display.

It was this, the writer believes, that was urged upon Jesus in the second temptation. He could at some great feast announce His Messiahship and carry the religious leaders off their feet by a sudden, popular outburst of His movement. To paraphrase the figurative language of Matthew 4:5-7, “To have appeared before them at the center of national worship with dash and brilliance, miraculously set down among them by Jehovah Himself, in Jehovah’s courts, would have been to secure instantaneous acceptance.”¹

To the mind of Jesus, this was not the plan of God. As the gospel history develops, it will be seen that Jesus

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted, 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

planned to establish His Kingdom by unfolding His life to a few receptive individuals who would in turn touch other lives until ultimately the Kingdom would dominate the world. Jesus was convinced that His Father wanted only those in His Kingdom who were drawn into its membership by the principles for which the Kingdom stood. Novelties and "catch-penny" schemes were not to be employed in establishing the Kingdom of God.

For months, Jesus even concealed His Messiahship from the disciples and did not announce His mission to the nation until a few hours before His death.

God's method, then, of inaugurating His Kingdom was not by spectacular mass movements but by the slower hand-to-hand work in which men came to a realization of the Fatherhood of God by contact with the life of His Son.

The third question Jesus had to decide was, "How shall I establish the Kingdom?"

Using again the modern parallel, if a man were deciding such a question in New York City to-day, he might think that the judicious plan would be to ally himself with the strongest political machine in the city. He could easily be elected alderman, and if a vote were to be taken on a corrupt nomination or a corrupt measure, he could pretend a call out of the city on business in order not to vote. Of course he himself would not take graft but he would only mildly protest against it in his party or among his associates. He would refrain from declaring his views openly and uncompromisingly until he had achieved a position of power and influence, and then he could institute his ideal organization. Perhaps he could be elected mayor, and then he could destroy the corrupt machine which had elected him and establish the Kingdom of God. He would compromise with existing institutions in order that eventually he might overthrow them.

This, the writer believes, Jesus was tempted to do in establishing the Kingdom of His Father. He could have been "tactful" and "judicious" and, perhaps, eventually have become high priest or even procurator. From such a position He could have established His Kingdom and have had the authority to enforce His views.

The third temptation, then, was for Jesus to compromise

with evil in order that good might eventually come, to secure an ultimate good by a temporary compromise with wrong.

"In opposition to this idea, Jesus proposed simply to do right at the moment, to worship God, and God only, each moment."¹ He refused to compromise with evil at any time but went to the cross because He was as uncompromising and fearless as any antagonist evil ever faced.

Read again the account of the temptation, and remember that it is "very likely that Jesus experienced depths and heights of temptation that He could not explain even to His disciples, but He made it clear to them that He was tempted, and very probably tempted as fiercely as any man ever has been, or ever will be, by temptations commensurate with His great nature."¹

Study II. Fourth Day

The Beginning of the Ministry of Jesus. Mark

1: 14-15

Read Mark 1: 14-15, which contains the general theme of the addresses of Jesus throughout Galilee. Jesus not only announced to the people that the Kingdom was about to be set up, but He gave the requirements for admission into the New Order with an urgent command that they enter.

"We can scarcely imagine what a furor of discussion these statements would have produced in Galilee. For what was the 'time fulfilled'? The Kingdom of God was, as has been previously stated, somewhat vaguely conceived, yet in the main it was thought of as a political organization of righteous Jews to be administered by Jehovah in the person of His Messiah, which would destroy or annex all other nations. It seems to have been expected also that the righteous dead would appear in this era. The establishment of the Kingdom would be preceded by the Messiah's judgment."¹

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

We shall see, as our studies progress, what the word "gospel" meant to Jesus. It has rather a vague and varied meaning in the language of the Christian church. To many, it signifies the idea of the atonement whereby the death of Jesus on the cross atoned for the sins of the world and satisfied divine justice. To others, it means the entire content of the Christian teaching and theology. To others, it pertains to the Person of Christ rather than to any of His teachings or discourses.

The word "gospel" means simply "good news," and to the Jews of the time of Jesus it meant, no doubt, that God was at last to establish His Kingdom among His chosen people and to relieve them from foreign oppression. It probably did not convey to their minds that Jesus regarded Himself as the Messiah, and from Mark 8:27-30 it can be seen that the people did not so regard it.

Study II. Fifth Day

The First Disciples. Mark 1:16-20; Matt. 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11

Mark 1:14 indicates a period of unrecorded activity on the part of Jesus between the time of the temptation and the imprisonment of John. It is probable that during this period Jesus became well acquainted with the men who were to become His intimate friends. Read Mark 1:16-20.

Jesus summons these Galileans to become "fishers of men." Perhaps they were thrilled by these words. It probably meant to them that they were to be the recruiting officers of the Messianic army. Surely it meant positions of prominence in the coming Kingdom, and immediately "they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him." The phrase, "with the hired servants," would indicate that these men were not of the poorest class in Galilee, although it is commonly thought that Jesus chose His disciples from that class. "These men were probably not fish peddlers going from door to door with their daily catch, but

fish packers preparing cured or pickled fish for the market.”¹ As a matter of fact, Jesus chose several of His disciples from the middle class, as He found less prejudice and more open-mindedness in this class than in any other group.

Many people suppose that these men gave up business and spent their entire time with Jesus, but it is more than likely that they continued their work. After this call, no doubt, they spent less time at business and more time with Jesus, just as we do in any modern religious campaign; but we have no basis for thinking that they ceased working entirely.

Jesus hoped to inspire these men with the ideals of the Kingdom of God and to unite them in friendship with the Father. As He would win them, so they would win other men.

“One would be glad to know the home life, the religious outlook, the aspirations and enthusiasms of well-disposed young Galileans like these fish packers.”¹

“And they followed him.” . . .

What a loss the world would have suffered if they had refused His invitation.

Study II. Sixth Day

The Authority of Jesus as a Teacher Astonishes the People. The Question of Miracles. Mark 1:21-45; Luke 4:31-44

It would be advisable during these studies to familiarize yourself with the geography of Palestine. Capernaum was a busy little city on the Lake of Galilee, where so many of the disciples lived, and where Jesus did more teaching than in any other place.

The usual Sabbath discourse in the synagogue consisted of a passage from the law or the prophets and its interpretation by quotations from the famous rabbis. “Rabbi Hillel says the interpretation of this passage is so and so.

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

Rabbi somebody-else says it is thus." Jesus however faced them and said, "The law reads thus, but *I say* unto you—" "It was," said Joseph H. Odell, "as if some untrained laborer from Tompkins Corners were to proclaim, 'Yes, the Magna Charta, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Supreme Court, and Congress may all agree upon that point, but I tell you they are wrong and I am right!'"¹ Jesus not only did not quote the rabbis but even seemed to be attempting to supplant the law itself by a message of His own. This we shall see clearly when we study the Sermon on the Mount. Read Mark 1:21-45.

The discussion of the question of the miracles is to be found in Study XV, Second Day. The writer believes that the cases of demoniac possession, such as are recorded here, were probably cases of insanity or acute melancholia brought on at times by the sufferer attributing his moods of depression to the haunting influences of evil spirits. Other cases resemble cases of epilepsy which are frequently seen to-day. These questions will be discussed later. It is suggested that the course be followed as outlined, and that the miracles be discussed in the order indicated above.

"Whatever the matter with the man was," in Mark 1:23-28, says Dean Bosworth, "the main thing is that Jesus was able at once to bring his disordered personality into quiet rationality and restore him to home and society. It was a great day for this nameless man and his friends."²

As soon as the Sabbath was ended, at sundown Saturday evening, v. 32, the crowds thronged the house where Jesus was staying. His ministry was not to be primarily one of physical relief; therefore He leaves for other villages to tell the "good news," vv. 38-39.

¹ Joseph H. Odell. *Atlantic Monthly*. February, 1918. Used by permission of the Atlantic Monthly Company. Boston.

² Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

Study II. Seventh Day

Review

Review to-day the studies for this week. Remember the writer has not stated that Jesus was the Son of God. The record says, that years ago a man appeared in Galilee who believed that dominating this universe in which we live is a God who is our Father. He also believed that God had chosen Him; Jesus of Nazareth, to be the special Son of God in order to establish the Kingdom of the Father among His children on earth. This realization of His Sonship and mission, the record says, came when Jesus was baptized. The plans for the Kingdom were determined at the temptation.

Consider to-day these questions:

1. Do you feel as if God has a plan for your life, and that you have a divine mission to perform in this world?

2. If temptation is a thought or a suggestion to act contrary to the will of God, do you think these were real temptations through which Jesus passed?

3. Some one has said, "Sin is nothing but selfishness." If so, then the recent war will compel us to reclassify the saints and the sinners. Many "lost sheep," as Donald Hankey called them, threw themselves with reckless abandon into the great conflict and with utter self-forgetfulness gave their lives on the battlefield, while others who in times of peace would have been classed with the saints stayed at home and reaped exorbitant profits on government contracts.

4. Are we compromising with evil in order to gain popularity? Are we gambling with the crowd in order, as we say, to get in touch with such men to help them? Are we only mildly protesting against evil in athletic, class, or fraternity life, hoping by our good fellowship to better conditions? Read again the third temptation and let us pray God this morning to cut the cowardice out of our hearts and give us sufficient manhood to stand alone in the right against the crowd in the wrong.

5. To-day, so-called Christian men are used as tools by corrupt politicians, and these "leading citizens" excuse their

acceptance of public office under such grafting machines on the ground that individually they do no wrong and that their influence within the party is beneficial. In view of the uncompromising attitude of Jesus toward evil, what should these men do?

6. Should a Christian lawyer do everything in his power to win a case for a corrupt client whom he knows to be guilty?

7. Should a man vote for a candidate for office who is not the best man, because the voter expects some personal or community gain by such an election? *Jesus placed doing right before every other consideration.*

8. Is conscience, in its generally accepted meaning, a judge of right and wrong? Doctor Frank Crane says, "Conscience is a sentiment. As hunger warns us that we need food, as pain warns us that the body is too cold or too hot for safety, so conscience is the natural sensation of discomfort that arises when we are conscious of doing wrong." "The Hindu mother is perfectly conscientious when she throws her child alive into the Ganges to be drowned as a sacrifice to some heathen god, . . . the Puritan felt extremely righteous when he burnt the alleged witch, . . . and Saint Paul himself tells us that when he haled Christians to prison he 'verily thought he was doing God's service.'" "Conscience is simply the moral nerve. . . . It does not act the same way in every person. How it shall act depends on what the individual thinks is right. Therefore conscience is entirely governed by the belief; that is, by what the intelligence says is right or wrong. . . . The simple rule of life, therefore is, first, to realize that one's first duty is to learn the truth, to love the truth, to follow it, and to take no substitutes. . . .

"Whosoever puts authority, or custom, or other folks' opinions, or his own personal comfort or advantage in the place of truth, will either be intolerant or immoral.

"Second, the only way to find truth is to obey as much of the truth as you already know."

Do you agree with the above statement?

9. How can we overcome temptation? After thinking on this question, consider these suggestions. First, we should cultivate the highest ideals by reading the biographies of such

men as "Chinese" Gordon, and David Livingstone; and by daily devotional study of the ideals of Him who hung on the cross on Calvary. Secondly, we should cultivate the friendship of strong Christian characters; especially by daily communion with the strongest Character of the ages whose indwelling presence we should cherish. Thirdly, we should play on the offensive. The best way to keep your opponents from scoring is to score yourself. "To make war," said Marshal Foch, "is to attack." In other words, live a life of aggressive loving service.

10. Sincere Christian men who have suffered physical or pecuniary loss frequently say, "I don't see why I have to suffer, when I have always tried to do right. There's Jones over there who has been crooked all his life and everything he does prospers." What light does the first temptation throw upon this complaint?

STUDY III. FIRST DAY

Jesus Prays. Mark 1:35-39; Luke 5:16

The popularity of Jesus increased to such an extent that He did not have time for daily communion with His Father. When the work of the day was over and sleep had fallen over the city, "before the stars had faded out of the sky above the lake, He stole out of the house and went to a quiet spot outside of the city to pray."¹ Read Mark 1:35-39. What did Jesus pray about? In answering this question let us remember that Jesus was probably as lonely as any man that ever lived. A missionary pioneering single-handed in some non-Christian country can appreciate this loneliness better than we who live in a Christian land surrounded by Christian friends. Apparently no one on earth understood what Jesus was trying to do. Hence, no one could give Him any appreciative sympathy. His disciples did not understand the significance of His life until after the resurrection. In Mark 8:17 His words seem spoken with a sorrowful impatience, "Do ye not yet perceive, neither understand? have ye your heart hardened?"

To have to carry a great burden through life without knowing one sympathetic, understanding heart would be a terribly severe trial. Perhaps in these all-night vigils, then, the prayer of Jesus consisted not so much in petition for Himself, or in intercession for others as in communion with God. He needed the companionship of His Father. He wanted the sympathy and strength which came from close friendship with the great understanding heart of God.

We have not the space to take up the question of prayer in

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press, New York.

these studies. That has been ably done in other books.¹ There is probably no question less understood than the real nature of prayer. A common idea is that prayer changes the attitude of God toward us, and that as a result of our prayer He does what He otherwise would not do. In fact, prayer only changes our attitude toward God and makes it possible for Him to accomplish in us what He otherwise could not accomplish.

"Probably some of the servants saw which way Jesus went . . . [when He left the house] . . . for Peter, in whose home He slept (v. 29), soon found Him."² To the surprise of the disciples Jesus did not intend to go back to Capernaum, but had planned a tour of preaching throughout Galilee, the reason for which was noted yesterday.

Study III. Second Day

Jesus Offends the Scribes by Assuming the Authority to Forgive Sins. Mark 2:1-12; Matt. 9:2-8; Luke 5:17-26

Jesus had now reached the height of His popularity. Mark 1:45 states that "they came to him from every quarter." In Mark 2:1-12, which should be read at this time, a note of discord is heard.

The inner court, where Jesus was teaching, probably had a skin or cloth covering of some kind for protection against the hot rays of the sun. It was this "roof" which the friends of the sick man uncovered. Try to picture this scene. The intense interest of the crowd and the eager anticipation of the trembling sick man as he lay before the popular healer, must have produced a striking background for the words of Jesus.

It was commonly supposed at that time that disease was

¹ Read that excellent little book by H. E. Fosdick, the *Meaning of Prayer*. The Association Press.

² *Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ*. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

caused by sin. Jesus said, first of all, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." He did not intend this to mean merely, "'If you have repented, I am sure God has forgiven your sins.' Any one could have told the man that. Jesus assumed to be able to look down into the man's heart and to see whether he had repented."¹ The scribes questioned this statement, and it is of little wonder they did. It was an assumption of Messianic authority.

Realizing their thoughts, Jesus came forth with a statement, framed in figurative language, which confirmed in their minds the growing suspicion that this man was a Messianic impostor. The title "Son of Man" is used here for the first time. It seems improbable that Jesus used this well-known Messianic title so early in His ministry. The whole trend of the gospel indicates that He purposely concealed His belief in His divine mission until after the momentous conversation with the disciples in Mark 8:27.

A discussion of the miracles is found in a later study. Note that in this case, Jesus "so wrought upon the man, mind and body, that the man willed to rise and did rise, . . . and make his way through the marveling crowds to the street outside, where his four friends had doubtless hurried down from the house-top to meet him."¹

Study III. Third Day

Jesus Eats with Publicans and Sinners. Mark 2:13-17; Matt. 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32

Instead of pacifying these offended scribes, Jesus further offended them by calling a publican to be one of His disciples and by eating with publicans and sinners in the home of His newly-chosen follower.

Read Mark 2:13-17. These men were not sinners in the same sense that we use the word to-day. "Sinners" did not mean men who had committed sin but men who had given up the sham religion of the nation and "no longer cared to attend

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

the synagogue services or to please the rabbis.”¹ The publicans were tax collectors, and as such were especially hated. Taxes were farmed out and extortion was generally practiced. For one of their own people to make money “out of the political humiliation of their nation by collecting taxes imposed by the Roman authorities or the Herods,”¹ was especially trying to a patriotic Jew. The Pharisees were strict observers of the law and did not associate with any irreligious people. Their contempt for the publicans and sinners was very great. “The rabbis were particularly unwilling to eat at a publican’s or sinner’s table, for these classes were certain to disregard food laws about which the rabbi was scrupulously particular. It was therefore a scandalous thing, from the rabbis’ standpoint, when a prophet actually invited a publican to associate intimately with him as a member of the inner circle of his disciples,”¹ and allow himself to be the guest of honor at a dinner party given in the home of such a man.

In doing this, Jesus disregarded the false standards by which men were classified in His time. He chose His friends by what they were in themselves. He classified men by character, not by family, wealth, or public reputation.

Read again v. 17 and notice the method of Jesus in dealing with the self-satisfied. What irony is expressed in the clear statement of Jesus of His mission on earth. The statement may be paraphrased thus. “You religious leaders have perfectly sound religious bodies? Very well, then, I have no message for you. I came to these so-called sinners who realizing their shortcomings are sincerely open-minded to the truth.”

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

Study III. Fourth Day

Jesus and His Disciples Do Not Fast. Mark 2: 18-22; Matt. 9: 14-17; Luke 5: 33-39

As time passed, the conduct of Jesus became more and more irritating to the religious Pharisees. To them, religion was almost entirely summed up in the strict observance of religious ritual. To Jesus, ritual was the husk of religion, necessary, no doubt, to the proper fruition of religious faith but assuredly not the kernel of it. Religious observances should be the outward expression of an inward reality and should be used for the cultivation of the inner life.

The third point in which Jesus offended the rabbis was His scandalous laxity regarding fasting. Read Mark 2: 18-22.

The "sons or companions of the bridegroom" correspond to the modern best man and ushers, who see to it that every one has a jolly time at the wedding, and that the occasion is a gala one.

In this first illustration, Jesus alludes for the first time to the inevitable end awaiting such a course as He is now pursuing. He realized perhaps thus early in His ministry that His life would be crushed out by these religious leaders. Yet He went forward with supreme confidence in the ultimate triumph of His cause.

The second illustration is that of an unshrunk piece of cloth used to patch an old garment. When the garment is washed again, the patch shrinks, and "a worse rent is made."

The third illustration is that of the new wine and the old wine skins. "The skins of animals were used for holding wine. . . . The fresh skins would stretch enough to accommodate themselves to the fermentation of the new wine, while the old skins, already stretched, would burst when the fermentation of the new wine began."¹

In the second illustration the *old* garment is torn, in the third illustration the *new* wine is lost.

Jesus realized that He could not patch up the old religious

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

conceptions with His ideas of the Kingdom or vitalize the old forms by an infusion of His life. Not only would the old system be torn but the new would also be lost.

"While the meaning of these illustrations was ambiguous, their possible significance must have seemed to the rabbis very startling."¹

Study III. Fifth Day

Jesus Is Lax in Observing the Sabbath. Mark 2: 23-28; Matt. 12: 1-8; Luke 6: 1-5

"The point at which the rabbi was most sensitive was Sabbath observance. He had wrought out the simple Sabbath law of the Mosaic legislation into innumerable and sometimes absurd details. Tailors must not carry needles on their coats late Friday afternoon lest the sun should set before they noticed it and they be carrying burdens on the Sabbath; the physician might take measures to prevent a serious disease from growing worse on the Sabbath, but must not try to cure it; minor ailments might not be treated at all. The rabbis went so far as to say that God had created man for the sake of His Sabbath law, that is, in order to have some one to obey His Sabbath law."¹

Jesus showed a disregard for this, which to the mind of the rabbis, was the most important of all the laws of God. His disciples plucked a few heads of wheat as they traveled along the road and rubbing them in their hands to remove the dried husks, ate the kernels of wheat. That was working on Sunday. Read Mark 2: 23-28.

Jesus reverses their ideas of the Sabbath. Sabbath laws and ritual observances, He said, were made for the benefit of man, not to add to his burdens. David disregarded the laws of the place of worship, for his life and the life of his companions were of more value than any tabernacle rules or religious

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press, New York.

laws. Then again came that underlying implication that so nettled the rabbis, that Jesus seemed to be assuming equal authority with David. He closed the discussion with the statement "that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath."

To-day the Sabbath is a burden to many well-intentioned people. It is a day of solemn, inactive brooding, not a day of joyous religious expression.

"How would you modify this statement: The Sabbath should be spent in such a way as to bring us to Monday morning with a clearer and happier sense of God and duty?"¹

Study III. Sixth Day

The Determination of the Religious Leaders to Destroy Jesus. Mar': 3: 1-6; Matt.

12: 9-14; Luke 6: 6-11

"The increasingly bitter feeling against Jesus came to a crisis in an episode that brought distinctly to light His attitude towards the Sabbath law. Read Mark 3: 1-6. Does the paragraph read as though the man had been brought into the synagogue to see whether or not Jesus would heal him? Whether this is so or not, evidently the rabbis knew that the man would be there and hoped that Jesus would heal him so that they might make a test case of it. 'Accuse,' in v. 2 indicates the lodgment of a formal charge of Sabbath-breaking against Him before the local authorities. Jesus met them boldly, with no effort to evade them."¹ Blazing with indignation at the cunning, selfish hypocrisy of these priests, Jesus tells the man to stand forth, and the withered hand is healed. The indignation of Jesus was aroused when He realized that the hearts of these priests were filled with selfish hatred toward Him and that they, on the Sabbath, were planning to kill Him for doing a kindly deed.

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

As to the cure, see study on Miracles. The point to be noted now is that the climax of the bitter opposition to Jesus was reached when He disregarded the Jewish idea of Sabbath observance and did a positive act of mercy on the seventh day.

It is the love and kindness we have in our hearts toward our wife, father, mother, and friends that God looks for and not whether we read a newspaper or whistle on Sunday.

"The Christian church has probably concerned itself too exclusively with the negative side of Sabbath observance. It has concentrated attention upon what men ought not to do, rather than upon what they ought to do. Jesus emphasizes the positive side. They ought to do good."¹

Study III. Seventh Day

Review

Years ago, a man appeared in a small country east of the Mediterranean Sea with the belief that He had been chosen to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth. He became exceedingly popular with the masses but soon offended the religious leaders of the time by professing to forgive sins, by associating with non-church-going men, and tax collectors, by disregarding religious ceremonies, and by undermining their idea of the Sabbath. This opposition grew so strong that the religious authorities determined in some way to kill this man. His name was Jesus.

Consider the following questions to-day:

1. What is your idea of prayer? Do you look upon prayer as a means of getting things or as a means of strengthening your character? Do you pray "give me," or "make me"? We should pray to God to help us form our ideals in accordance with His will, to strengthen our characters, to help us keep our bodies clean and strong, and to inspire us with the willingness of Jesus to die for the right.

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

2. Why did Jesus not go back to Capernaum to heal more people?

3. What did Jesus say which offended the rabbis, in Mark 2: 1-12?

4. May any objection be raised to the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees? Was their question a reasonable one?

5. In 2: 15-17, Jesus disregarded the social customs of His time. Without hesitation, He ate with these men because He saw their open-mindedness to truth and their sincerity in following the light they had. He judged men by what they were in themselves or were capable of becoming.

"A picture or bust of Abraham Lincoln adorns the halls of many colleges in this country. Yet if Lincoln matriculated as a student in many of these colleges to-day, he would not be admitted to any of the social clubs or fraternities, because of his uncouth dress and manners." Do you judge men by their use of knife and fork, by the color of their skin, by their social standing, by their military rank, by their ancestry, by their wealth, or do you judge them, as Jesus did, by the standard of character, by their real worth as men?

It is reported that Booker T. Washington, a negro, dined at the White House as a guest of President Roosevelt. Did Roosevelt do right according to Mark 2: 15-17? Only five minutes allowed for the discussion of this question.

6. Were the scribes and Pharisees "whole and righteous"? Look again at the method of Jesus of dealing with self-satisfied men and you will not waste much time in arguing with men or students who are secure in their own righteous self-conceit. Let contact with these men develop in you the virtue of tolerance and patience.

7. "Righteousness," says Wendt, "is not only the idea of legality, equity, impartiality in judgment and retribution . . . but . . . as applied to men . . . specially denotes a disposition for action which takes the will of God as its supreme norm."¹ Many men to-day pride themselves upon paying their debts and being truthful, whose lives are thoroughly selfish, and who would not follow the will of God should it necessitate personal sacrifice of any kind.

¹ The Teaching of Jesus. H. H. Wendt. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

8. In 2: 18-28, Jesus states that religious observances are not an end in themselves, but that their value is determined by their worth in producing better lives. First in importance stand the eternal principles of righteousness for which even life itself must be sacrificed. Next stands the individual life, in the development of which, rules, customs, and ceremonies are intended to aid but not to burden. They are to be swept away the moment they cease to enrich life. They must meet the test of service.

9. Upon what principle did David and the high priest act?

10. What is your idea of properly keeping the Sabbath? Is the Sabbath for recreation, rest, pleasure, worship, or a mixture of all of these?

11. Could it be right for one man to play baseball on Sunday and wrong for another?

12. What was the fundamental difference between the conception of Jesus of religion and that of the rabbis?

STUDY IV. FIRST DAY

Choosing the Twelve Disciples. Mark 3: 13-19; Luke 6: 12-19

Read Mark 3: 7-12 reserving until a later study any discussion of the miracles recorded. When Jesus realized that the rabbis had determined to destroy Him (Mark 3: 6), He chose twelve men from among His followers in order that He might concentrate His work upon them.

Many of these disciples never appear prominently in the gospel history. Peter, the impetuous, sturdy leader, rapidly assumed a dominant position and became the spokesman of the group. After the death of Jesus, he became a prominent figure in the early church, and tradition has him as the first Pope of Rome. James and John, called "sons of thunder," perhaps on account of their fiery temperaments, with Peter, formed an inner circle of the twelve upon whom Jesus relied more than upon any of the others for the ultimate triumph of His cause. It was these three only who were with Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration, the Garden of Gethsemane, and on other special occasions. Matthew was a tax collector whose presence must have been irritating to the Jewish rabbis, who so intensely hated a publican. Andrew, Philip, and Thomas are mentioned in the Gospel of John, but we know very little about them. Judas Iscariot, the notorious traitor, is the only one of the twelve who is said not to have been a Galilean.

Hundreds of men have lived who were equal to these twelve disciples. They became known to history only by following the leadership of a great man and by throwing their lives into a great cause. It is not our abilities that determine our worth to the world as much as the nobility of the cause to which we dedicate ourselves.

Jesus saw in these men sincere open-mindedness and great possibilities for good. He believed that, although their crude conceptions of the reason of His call would be shattered by His death, ultimately they would catch the vision and give His message to the world.

The choosing of twelve men must have further aroused the suspicions of the rabbis, as it must have looked to them like the revival of the old idea of the twelve tribes.

Study IV. Second Day

The Sermon on the Mount. Matt. 5-7. The Beatitudes. 1. Open-Mindedness. 2. Repentance

"Matthew, who records far more of Jesus' teaching than does Mark, evidently felt that in the beginning of his Gospel there should stand some formal report of Jesus' principal teachings."¹ We will now study chapters 5-7 in Matthew, commonly called the "Sermon on the Mount."

This collection of the teachings of Jesus has been given various titles, such as the Constitution of the Kingdom of God, the Principles of the Kingdom set forth in Contrast with the Spirit of the Times, the Ideal Life. The outline of Professor Votaw is perhaps as brief and as good as any, and we will give it here in order that it may be used for reference later:

Theme: The Ideal Life: Its Characteristics, Mission, and Outworkings, and the Duty of Attaining It.

- A. The ideal life described. Matt. 5: 1-16; Luke 6: 20-26.
 - a. Its characteristics. Matt. 5: 1-12; Luke 6: 20-26.
 - b. Its mission. Matt. 5: 13-16.
- B. Its relation to the earlier Hebrew ideal. Matt. 5: 17-20.
- C. The outworkings of the ideal life. Matt. 5: 21-7: 12; Luke 6: 27-42.

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

- a. In deeds and motives. Matt. 5: 21-48; Luke 6: 27-30, 32-36.
 - b. In real religious worship. Matt. 6: 1-18.
 - c. In trust and self-devotion. Matt. 6: 19-34.
 - d. In treatment of others. Matt. 7: 1-12; Luke 6: 31, 37-42.
- D. The duty of living the ideal life. Matt. 7: 13-27; Luke 6: 43-49.¹

Let us now study the text in detail. Read Matthew 5: 3-12. These verses are commonly called the Beatitudes, from the Latin word "beati," with which each verse opens in the Vulgate. Many translate "blessed" as "happy."

"Happy" or "blessed," then, said Jesus, "are the poor in spirit." It was among the poor of His day that Jesus frequently found the most open-minded reception of truth. Wealth, position, or selfishness had not so much clouded their vision or warped their judgment. The "poor in spirit," then, are "those who in their spirits feel like poor men"² and realize "their spiritual deficiency and dependence upon God," and are humble, teachable, and open-minded to the truth. "This quality of humble teachableness is fitly placed first in this sketch of the ideal life, for it is the first essential of all growth into better things. It is the door of entrance to the kingdom of science, as well as to the Kingdom of Heaven."³

Read Matthew 5:4. Jesus here thought of those who mourned for the sin of Israel, as in Isaiah 61: 1-3, and applied the thought to the individual. "By those that mourn, Jesus means those who sorrow for their sins, who are conscious of their defects, and lament them, who are genuinely repentant."³ But consider the verse in its customary meaning. Sorrow comes into every life, but to those whose lives are joined in friendship with the Father sorrow is a blessing

¹ Votaw, art. Sermon on Mount, in Hastings Dictionary of the Bible, extra volume, p. 14. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

² Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

³ The Ethics of Jesus. H. C. King. Copyrighted 1910. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York.

and not a curse, for it deepens our sense of the presence of God and draws our friends in the Kingdom closer to us. Those who mourn, says Dean Bosworth, "will not be comforted by God alone, but by other members with the sympathy that is to characterize the New Order. The sympathies of men in the New Order will be so strong and true that the sorrow which gives opportunity for their expression is a blessing." ¹

Study IV. Third Day

**The Sermon on the Mount (continued). Matt. 5:
5-6. The Beatitudes. 3. Self-Control. 4.
Aspiration the Test of Character**

Smith, Jones, Brown, and others lived together in a college fraternity house. By the neglect of the others, the task of looking after the house fell to Smith. He not only paid his room rent but also supervised the cleaning, watched the fires, and paid the bills. Jones, on the other hand, did little in the care of the house and his room rent was frequently in arrears. One Sunday, the servant did not come. Smith asked Jones to get five cents' worth of kindling wood from a store close at hand so that the fire could be made. Jones got wood which was unsuitable for the purpose. When he entered the basement, Smith, in an uncomplaining manner, said, "What did you get that kind for?" Jones threw the wood on the floor and in angry tones said, "If you don't like that kind, go get it yourself." A majority of men would have been tempted to break a stick of wood over the head of Jones. Instead of angrily retorting, Smith looked at Jones with an expression of pity, and, without saying a word, went to the store and bought the kind of wood needed. That was meekness. The word "meekness" may be translated "good manners" as illustrated above.

Perhaps one of the meekest men in American public life was Abraham Lincoln. Soon after he became president,

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

Secretary Seward wrote him a long letter telling him how to conduct himself as president. Secretary Chase showed his disgust and disdain of the uncouth ways of the President. Secretary Stanton told a delegation which presented a petition to him adding that it had the indorsement of the President, that then the President was a d—— fool. Instead of sending for General McClellan to come to the White House, Lincoln frequently called at the headquarters of McClellan, only to be kept waiting as an ordinary caller before McClellan would see him. Calling one evening when the General was out, Lincoln waited an hour for him. When McClellan returned and was told that the President wished to see him, he went directly upstairs and retired for the night. To all these insults and indignities, Lincoln paid no attention, and harbored no resentment. "Never mind," he said, "I will hold McClellan's horse, if he will only bring us success." The advice of Lincoln to a young officer who had been court-martialed for quarreling was, "No man, resolved to make the most of himself, can spare time for personal contention. Still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiating of his temper and the loss of self-control. Yield larger things to which you can show no more than equal right; and yield lesser ones, though clearly your own. Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him in contesting for the right. Even killing the dog would not cure the bite."

"Meekness is, thus, self-control at its highest power. . . . It is no milk and water virtue, and still less a superfluous virtue. It is a root-virtue, and essential to the strong man. The meek are set over against those who are perpetually jealous of their rights, and as persistently claiming everything for themselves,—those of brazen assurance. As contrasted with these, the meek do not press even their plain rights; but under the provocation of the invasion of their rights, maintain their self-control, and bear and forbear, 'enduring all things.'"¹ These people, said Jesus, "shall inherit the earth," because the meek man "escaping the feeling of being constantly slighted and offended, does not feel that everything is due him, so he is content and cheerful, where

¹ *The Ethics of Jesus*. H. C. King. Copyrighted 1910. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York.

pride and assumption would be only miserable. . . . These people are able also to enter into the joy of others, and so to share in a very real sense in all joy. They own the world, as only such spirits can." ¹

Read Matthew 5:6. Most of us do not really want to be clean, true, and loving. Our expressed wishes are high-sounding and our prayers would indicate lofty aspirations, but our inmost desires are not actually in accord with our outward expressions. We desire the rewards of righteousness without paying the price of incorporating righteousness in our lives. But happy are those, said Jesus, "who hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." This implies, then, a persistent eagerness and an earnest fight for the highest character.

Study IV. Fourth Day

The Sermon on the Mount (continued). Matt. 5: 7-12; Luke 6:20-26. The Beatitudes. 5. Sympathy. 6. Purity. 7. Promoting Love Among Men. 8. Sacrificing for Men

Read Matthew 5:7. Mercy is not a soft, effeminate virtue but a trait of the strong. Mercy means sympathy, courtesy, and kindness. Only those who have been severely tempted and have triumphed can really sympathize with tempted men. Only those who have drunk the cup of sorrow to the dregs, and have had their natures deepened thereby, can truly sympathize with the sorrow-laden.

Sympathy or mercy implies understanding. It is the strong character who has struggled with the problems and temptations of life and has overcome them that can truly show sympathy to those who fall by the wayside.

"Happy," then, said Jesus, "are the hard, domineering, tyrannical people?" No. But the merciful, for they shall receive mercy as they have given it.

¹ The Ethics of Jesus. H. C. King. Copyrighted 1910. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York,

Read Matthew 5:8. The man who indulges in or broods over impurity, said Jesus, loses his vision of God. For in just the proportion as our inward lives are pure will our vision of God be clarified. But purity is not only personal, it implies a reverence for the sacredness of others. "No love is a pure love that lacks some real reverence—to which the one loved is not really sacred. And a pure love becomes, for this very reason, the strongest of all human motives to self-control. The pure in heart recognize the child of God in every soul, and treat him, accordingly, not as a thing but as a holy person." ¹

Read Matthew 5:9. "The peacemaker is more than a peace-keeper. He belongs to that high order of men who are able to be reconcilers of their fellowmen, who actively promote peace among men, who enter into God's own work of bringing men into unity. They are set over against those who stir up strife and promote war, whether in large or small ways. They have no part in the activity of those of whom the Proverbs speak so contemptuously,—the whisperer, the meddler, the tale-bearer, the busybody, the tattler, and the mischief-maker. The peacemaker not only withstands hate, but positively promotes the reign of love among men." ¹ He does not catch at every piece of dirty gossip and continually repeat it. He tries to correct the evil and reconcile the differences between men.

Read Matthew 5:10-12. Happy, did Jesus say, are the men who inherit wealth, who have an easy life, who can walk a fence between good and evil and maintain friendship with both sides, who never face unpopularity for doing right, who have never had to take up arms in a righteous cause? Not so, but happy are those who really sacrifice for the sake of promoting the principles of the Kingdom. Be sad? Not at all, rejoice, when men call you a crank, a fanatic, a fool, treat you with contempt, or unjustly persecute you for doing right. This, then, is a call to heroic service and supreme joy.

We have now completed the Beatitudes according to Matthew. Read Luke 6:20-26. Allen, Votaw, King, and Har-

¹ The Ethics of Jesus. H. C. King. Copyrighted 1910. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York.

nack think the account of Matthew is the more accurate and prefer it. Wendt, Bacon, and others prefer the account of Luke, asserting that the account of Matthew, in accordance with the ideas of the early church, softened down the harshness of Luke 6:20-26. If the account of Luke be accepted, then Jesus emphasized, says Bacon, "That true blessedness is not with the outwardly enviable, but the inwardly, however wretched in men's eyes. As usual, in such cases, the nearer we come to the original the greater is the simplicity and self-consistency of the thought. It answers the question, Wherein lies the blessedness of the kingdom? not, What must be done to attain it?"¹

Choose either account as the more accurate, but get the principles underlying both, since the central thought in each evidently came from Jesus.

Study IV. Fifth Day

The Sermon on the Mount (continued). The Beatitudes Summarized

Review to-day the Beatitudes and think of the derision and laughter with which these sayings of Jesus must have been received by the officials and religious leaders of His day. He opposed a worldly code which ran thus:

Happy is the man who "knows-it-all." He is not bothered with seeking for light.

Happy is the man whose conscience permits him to do anything. He suffers no remorse.

Happy is the man who fights for his rights and claims a little more than his share. He'll be sure to get it.

Happy is the man who doesn't care if his character is a little off-color, if he can profit by it.

Happy are the tyrant and the master, for they need no mercy.

¹ The Sermon on the Mount. B. W. Bacon. Copyrighted 1902. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York,

Happy is the impure man who gratifies his passion unhindered, for he shall have much pleasure.

Happy is he who can carry news which will stir up strife, for he can profit by the quarrel.

Happy is he who can lead an easy, indifferent life, for he'll not have to bother with questions of sacrifice.¹

But this code, said Jesus, only brought sorrow, bitterness, and ruin.

Review the qualities which He emphasized:

Personal.

1. A teachable humility. v. 3.
2. Genuine penitence. v. 4.
3. Self-control at its highest power, v. 5.
4. A persistent eagerness for the highest character. v. 6.

Social.

5. Sympathy with men. v. 7.
6. Deepest reverence toward men. v. 8.
7. Promoting love among men. v. 9.
8. Sacrificing for men. vv. 10-12.

"Character, happiness, influence — these make life. And their prime conditions Jesus has named in the Beatitudes. Here, then, indeed, are our map of life, our chart, our sailing orders, even in the purely ethical sphere.

"In the Beatitudes, therefore, Jesus is virtually saying to the 'disciple multitude' before him: I wish you, first and most of all, character. These qualities which I have named are the really basic qualities of character. . . .

"And I wish you joy. Not carelessly, as those who know not what they wish! But fully, knowing what it costs, I wish you joy — the best, the largest, the richest, the deepest joy that life can give. . . .

"And I wish you influence, that you may count. The steady oncoming of the civilization of brotherly men demands in its leaders just these qualities of which I have spoken. . . ." ¹

¹ *The Ethics of Jesus.* H. C. King. Copyrighted 1910. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York.

Study IV. Sixth Day

The Sermon on the Mount (continued). Matt. 5: 13-20. The Influence of Members of the Kingdom in Everyday Life

Read Matthew 5:13-16. After describing the ideal life in vv. 3-12, Jesus next told of its mission. It was to be a preservative. As salt preserved the fish that were cured in the packing houses of Capernaum, so would the members of the Kingdom keep society from decay. "Would you do away with the church, then?" was asked of a man who ridiculed religion. "Oh, no," he said, "the church is a good thing to keep us from slipping back into hoggishness."

Secondly, the members of the Kingdom were to be as light to scatter the darkness of evil and sin, and show men the way of life. Not only were they to be a preservative, but they were to be an active force for good.

And, said Jesus, men seeing your good works will also follow the guidance of your Father. We talk of having or using our influence as if it were an external attachment to our natures to be used in our hands as a knife is used in whittling a stick. We *are* an influence, whether we will or not, permeating our environment for good or evil, for a city set on a hill cannot be hid. Goodness, however, is as contagious as evil, and a Christlike life will draw other men to glorify and serve the same Master we serve. Read again Matthew 5:13-16.

Just here, perhaps, some priest interrupted Jesus with the question, "Are you not undermining and destroying the Mosaic law?" "No," said Jesus, "I came not to destroy but to fulfill. The man who follows me will not only fulfill the requirements of the law, but will do much more than the law requires. The trouble with you Pharisees is not that you go too far but that you do not go far enough." Then turning to His disciples He said, "If your righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of these scribes whose life consists in obeying external rules, you cannot even enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Read Matthew 5:17-20. Vv. 18-19

are probably not a part of the original sermon, for they represent Jesus as speaking in accord with the rabbinical view of the law, which is inconsistent with the rest of the sermon as expressed in vv. 21-48. These words may have been spoken by Jesus on other occasions to express His respect for the authority of the moral intent of the law, but the writer believes they have been incorrectly inserted here. We will omit them and let v. 20 follow directly after v. 17. For detailed discussion of this point see references 13 and 21.

Imagine a man addressing a group of laymen and ministers to-day and telling the laymen that unless they lived better lives than the clergymen that they could not enter the Kingdom of Heaven! Yet Jesus did just that.

Study IV. Seventh Day

Review

Look back to-day over the ground covered this past week. The man who appeared in Galilee years ago believing He was chosen by God to establish the Kingdom of God on earth outlined to His followers the basic principles of real life. Our knowledge has increased, our inventions have multiplied, our civilization is far in advance of that of A. D. 30 but the ideals which the Carpenter of Nazareth placed before the multitudes of His day are still very imperfectly realized in our lives, and they are the distant ethical goal toward which civilization is striving.

1. The first principle outlined is open-mindedness. Before proceeding further, determine honestly whether you are facing Christ with an open mind? Are you following this course at the urgent request of some interested friend, intending to accept only that truth which agrees with certain preconceived ideas of yours? Will you make this prayer to-day?

“O Father, with Thy help I promise to face the truth honestly, and when I see it, to follow it, cost what it may.”

v. 3.

2. We notice that Jesus also expresses character in terms of aspiration. Not what we accomplish but what we *endeavor*

to accomplish is acceptable in the sight of God. The sacrifice of a soldier who died in a training camp, if he were animated by the same courageous purpose, was as acceptable in the sight of God as the deeds of a man who won a medal of honor on the field of battle. Both were heroes.

3. Do you listen to and repeat indecent stories? v. 8.

4. Would you suffer unpopularity for the sake of Christ? Would you throw away your chances of being elected president of your class by fighting for a clean banquet? A friend of "Bill" Borden said of him, "We all admired the way he stood up for what he believed, in the face of no end of ridicule from the rest of the class. Bill was willing to be a 'fool for Christ's sake.'" ¹ Are you? Christ is not asking you to throw your life away but to save it. Not self-effacement but self-realization is placed before you. This, said Jesus, comes through self-sacrifice. vv. 10-12.

5. Is your light so shining that your fellow students are being unconsciously drawn toward Christ? Are you incorporating the principles of Jesus in your conduct? v. 16.

6. Is your idea of religion obedience to a set of rules or a life dominated by the purposes of Almighty God? v. 20.

¹ Christian Standards in Life. Murray-Harris. The Association Press. New York.

STUDY V. FIRST DAY

The Sermon on the Mount (continued). Matt. 5: 21-32. A Man Lives Within. Thoughts and Motives Determine His Character

After having stated that He came not to destroy but to fulfill the law, Jesus then illustrated the way in which His principles demanded, not only an external observance of the law but also an internal purpose in accord with the spirit of the law. The scribes judged men by their outward acts. Jesus judged men by their thoughts and motives. Read vv. 21-25. Vv. 25-26, the writer believes, are incorrectly inserted here as they were spoken as a warning to the unrepentant nation as in Luke 12:54-59. If applied in a personal sense as here, Jesus would be urging men to do right for fear of suffering the consequences of sin, which would be a contradiction of His other teachings and inconsistent with the tenor of His life. (See references 13 and 21 for complete discussion.) For instance, said Jesus in support of His declaration regarding the law, "Ye have heard that it was said to the ancients, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever killeth he shall be amenable to judgment. But I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be amenable to judgment. (Moreover it was said), Whosoever shall call his brother Scoundrel shall be amenable to the court. But I say unto you, Whosoever calleth him Simpleton shall be amenable to the hell of fire."¹ Not only are we not to kill men, but we are not to hate men. If your hatred is so intense that you desire to kill a man, you are just as much of a murderer as if you had killed him. The effect on the man is not the same, but the effect on you is probably worse, for you are

¹ The Sermon on the Mount. B. W. Bacon. Copyrighted 1902. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York.

not only a murderer at heart but probably a coward also. "If therefore," said Jesus, "you are about to kneel in prayer or attend devotional service and remember, not that you have a grudge in your heart, but that your fellow student has aught against you, leave your knees, first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your petition to God." Every other duty must yield to the absolute obligation of cherishing a forgiving spirit.

The hell of fire which Jesus here refers to, is not the hell usually pictured in Christian theology. There are two words in the New Testament translated in the King James Version as "hell." One is "hades" or in the Old Testament, "sheol," which is the dwelling place of departed spirits. The other refers to the valley of Gehenna outside of Jerusalem in which the garbage and refuse of the city was thrown. Here the constantly smoldering fires, the maggots, and the stench, gave Jesus an illustration which He used in contrasting the inevitable environment of sin with the surroundings of the righteous. He who harbors ill will, hatred, or a grudge against his neighbor will not only not enter the Kingdom but is morally like decayed garbage cast into the Gehenna of fire.

Read Matthew 5:27-32. In another instance of His relation to the law, Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Not only no outward sin, but no impure look or immoral brooding is allowed by the principles of the Kingdom. Many men have been haunted by horrible, fiendish thoughts which they thought to be sin. A thought is not a sin unless it is invited and then entertained. We cannot keep birds from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from building their nests in our hair. Sin is not in the entrance of the thought into our mind but in our attitude toward the thought after it flashes before us. When a man delights in temptation, then temptation becomes sin.

"Again, it was said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a letter of divorce." "But I say unto you," said Jesus, "Every one that putteth away his wife committeth adultery, and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced com-

mitteth adultery." "Saving for the cause of fornication," the writer believes, is an unwarranted insertion (see Mark 10:2-12), inconsistent with the uncompromising attitude of Jesus toward evil. The foundation of society is the home. In it the character of the child is nurtured. In the love and devotion of father and mother, the boy gets his first understanding of the love and care for us of our Heavenly Father. The home, then, is sacred, and whatever tends to undermine it is not to be tolerated or compromised with. It is better that some should suffer unjustly than that the sacredness of the home should be destroyed. Prohibition of divorce is not too strict; our marriage laws are lax. Parents allow their children to enter into marriage uninstructed and unprepared for the responsibilities and readjustments which they must face in this new era of their lives. When the inevitable disappointment follows, they seek relief for them by divorce.

Read now Matthew 5:29-30. "Whatever," then, said Jesus, "is retarding your spiritual development, cast it out of your life." Remember, operations are not performed on healthy organs; it is the diseased appendix or the cancerous growth which must be removed. Nothing wholesome has to be eliminated, but only that which breeds immoral disease or saps the spiritual vitality.

Study V. Second Day

The Sermon on the Mount (continued). Matt. 5:

33-42. Men of the Kingdom Are Trustworthy and Forgiving

Read Matthew 5:33-37. You have heard the expression applied to certain men, "his word is as good as his bond," or "I would rather have his word for a thing than his signed contract." The Jews had many kinds of oaths, some binding, and others not binding. They would seemingly obligate themselves in a contract and then by a technicality in the oath would repudiate the obligation at their convenience. In the Kingdom, said Jesus, men are to be so thoroughly honest that the simple "Yes," or "No," will carry with it the author-

ity of truthfulness without the necessity of adding the artificial formula of an oath, in order to make it binding. Truthfulness consists not in meeting binding, external obligations but in the honest purposes of the heart.

Read Matthew 5:38-42. Smith travelled a rural district in Virginia as a salesman for the Hill Commission Company of Baltimore. He not only bought and sold goods but also collected money and receipted bills. In the course of time, however, the bookkeeper of the firm discovered that Smith had "juggled" his accounts, and that he was short a large sum of money. Mr. Hill sent for the salesman and in the quiet of the private office, said, "Smith, in auditing your accounts, we have discovered a large shortage of money. I suppose you realize we can put you 'behind the bars' for this. But I'll not do that. We are going to give you another chance. You go back to your route, continue working for us as usual, and every month send me fifty dollars out of your commissions until you have paid back the amount you have stolen."

Hill did wrong, you say? "There are too many crooks in the world who live on the money some honest man has earned. The thieves ought to be punished. Let 'em take their medicine like the rest of us. This mercy merely encourages men to steal." So argue some and perhaps with seeming reason.

Almost dazed by the unmerited kindness of his employer, Smith went back to work and regularly sent fifty dollars every month to the firm to make good his defalcation. When the last payment was due, he went to Baltimore to deliver the amount in person and to close the account. The business was settled on Saturday. Sunday morning, Smith and Hill attended church together. The minister, incidentally or providentially, just as you please, preached on the text, "He that smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Little did the preacher realize that an excellent illustration of the text was sitting in the congregation before him. Later in the day, in the parlor of the home of Mr. Hill, Smith broke down and wept like a child. Both men realized as never before the real meaning of the words of Jesus in vv. 39-42. Jesus does not mean here that

you are to satisfy the whims of people who want you to walk a mile with them, or to lend your money to every unthrifty borrower, or to encourage idleness by giving away your clothes to those who refuse to work, or to let a man pommel you in the street without defending yourself. He is not advocating that we allow dishonest business men to go unpunished. It lowers the moral tone of a community to allow a man to maintain a respectable social and religious standing while profiting from dishonest or corrupt practices. Neither is this a doctrine of the passive non-resistance of evil. A man whose blood does not boil at the sight of injustice or oppression and who is not willing to give his life to crush it, is not half a man. "Some men," said an old Southern minister, "can be knocked down to the glory of God." Jesus is here attacking the spirit of revenge and hatred which embitters us on account of wrong done us. Instead of harboring personal grievances, insults, or injuries, no matter how unjust, and waiting for an opportunity to "get even" we ought, said Jesus, to turn the other cheek and return good for evil. The man who hates is always more injured than the man who is hated. Revenge is like poison to our spiritual lives. It embitters and hardens us, when we brood over it, and eventually destroys our likeness to Christ.

Some of these sayings of Jesus may seem harsh and severe. Jesus never tried to make it easy for men to follow Him. It was a self-sacrificing, heroic task to which He called men, and He expressed His teachings in a clear, concise form without any qualifications which could be used as excuses for disobedience in so-called exceptional instances. Neither did He use illustrations which, although not limiting the meaning, would in any way obscure the principle He wished to teach.

Study V. Third Day

The Sermon on the Mount (continued). Matt. 5: 43-6: 4. The Law Is Summarized in Love

Read now Matthew 5:43-48 and try to realize the import of what you are reading. How easy it is to repeat the words,

"Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you," but how difficult to practice. Do you love and pray for the fellow who by misrepresentation kept you from being elected captain of the football team, or kept you out of a certain fraternity on account of a personal grudge against you, or for the fellow who was reared with you as a boy but by political influence secured a commission and now hardly deigns to notice you, or for the man who went into business with you and cheated you out of every cent you had? Do you harbor any resentment against any of these men? If they were destitute would you do them a service if you had an opportunity?

If you, as soon as you are injured, look for revenge, you are no better than, if as good as, the man who injured you. If you are kind only to those who are kind to you, you do not deserve any credit for that, the taxgatherers, the thieves, the excommunicate, even dogs, are kind to their friends. "But you," said Jesus, "are to love your enemies and to requite ill will by kindness; injury by loving service. For so your Heavenly Father treats you and all mankind. He makes the sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." This spirit of forgiveness is not an element of character to which we force ourselves to assent, producing such remarks as, "Well, I forgive him, but I'll never forget it." It is not a virtue we practice in order to feel that we have satisfied the requirements of Jesus for membership in the Kingdom. Neither should it be practiced in order to make our enemy ashamed of himself by heaping coals of fire on his head. It should be a spontaneous, unconditional, forgiving love which springs from our sense of the Fatherhood of God and of His unmerited, forgiving love to ourselves as well as to others.¹ Let us therefore strive to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect, for we cannot share His life or ask for His blessings as long as our hearts are tainted with hate.

Refer to the outline in Study IV, Second Day, and see how far we have progressed in this great discourse. We now take up C-b, the outworkings of the ideal life in real religious wor-

¹ The Teaching of Jesus. H. H. Wendt. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

ship. Matthew 6:1 is the general theme, the illustrations of which follow. Read Matthew 6:1-4. Jesus is here emphasizing that giving which springs from love of people and does not expect commendation. He is condemning the selfish giver who is not interested in helping others but only in securing personal glory and a reputation for benevolence.

Samuel J. Mills did as much, perhaps, as any one man to bring into existence the American Bible Society. When it was organized, he sat in the gallery unknown and unrecognized, yet his heart was overflowing with joy and thanksgiving that one of his cherished dreams had been realized.

A soldier in France requested that no mention be made of a very heroic deed he performed.

Is your life dominated by a genuine, unselfish interest in the promotion of the Kingdom of God?

Study V. Fourth Day

The Sermon on the Mount (continued). Matt. 6:5-18. The Lord's Prayer

Do not hasten through it because it is familiar, but read thoughtfully Matthew 6:5-15. Refer to Luke 11:1 for the circumstances which led Jesus to teach His disciples this prayer. The condition of effective prayer is not in the length of the petition, or the place in which it is said, or even in the actual words uttered. Prayer is effective when the desires of the believer are in accord with the will of God. Many of the most effective prayers are those in which not a word is spoken, but the heart is awed by the presence of the spirit of the Father.

First, realize the simplicity of "The Lord's Prayer." It opens with "Our Father who art in heaven," not, "Almighty God, Creator and Ruler of all Mankind, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Eternal in the Heavens," but just simply, "Our Father." How that changes our attitude in prayer! We are not praying to a God as a theological abstraction, or as a mechanical First Cause, but as a personal Father who is far more interested in us than a human father can possibly be.

But let us not assume familiarity in this conception of God. We must realize that His Fatherly love intensifies and magnifies His Glorious Majesty.¹ Then naturally follow the words, "Hallowed be thy name."

Next is a petition not only that the purposes of God may be accomplished, but that the highest good may come to mankind in having the will of the Father done on earth as in heaven.

Next is a petition for daily sustenance. Not great amassing of wealth and goods, should we desire, but sufficient needs for the body in order that we may effectively do His will.

"Forgive us our sins," is the next petition, which is a vain request unless we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.

Last of all, we do not ask to avoid the conflict but to be kept from temptations too severe for our weak natures, and to be delivered from the evil.

Read again 6:14-15. The unforgiving spirit separates us from God and makes it impossible for Him to work His will through us.

Read Matthew 6:16-18. Jesus now gives His last illustration of the outworkings of the ideal life in real religious worship. It is as if Jesus were saying, "Don't pretend to be better than you are, don't assume a sanctimonious attitude in order to win the approval of others, don't join a particular church in order to 'get in' with a select social set, don't take an active interest in the Christian Association in order to make a senior society, don't picture righteousness as a melancholy attitude toward life."

Jesus loathed hypocrisy and unwholesomeness. Perhaps nowhere do we find any sharper invective against sham or hypocrisy than in the words of Jesus. He emphasized also the happy and positive side of life. Compare the occasional idea of a missionary as a melancholy, sanctimonious, tract distributor with the life of Arthur Frame Jackson.² Every wholesome activity of life comes within the sphere of the Christian. The only point a man has to determine is that

¹ The Teaching of Jesus. H. H. Wendt. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

² Christian Standards in Life. Murray-Harris. The Association Press. New York.

every activity of his life be in accord with and subordinated to the will of God as expressed in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Study V. Fifth Day

The Sermon on the Mount (continued). Matt. 6: 19-7: 14. Jesus Illustrates the Tender Care of the Father over His Children. Judge Not

Most of the teachings of Jesus are so clear that comment is often superfluous and sometimes detracts from the grandeur of His words. Such is Matthew 6:19-34. Vv. 19-24 were addressed to the wealthy and contented rich, whose dominant desire in life was the acquisition of property. Oriental wealth consisted chiefly in fine cloths and metals, which moths and rust would destroy. Do not, said Jesus, place the chief emphasis of your life on these transient things. If you do, it will cloud your spiritual sight so that moral blindness will result. You can have only one master passion in your life. You cannot serve God and riches. You must serve the one or the other. There is nothing wrong in honestly acquiring wealth, in fact, we believe it is beneficial, if such efforts are subordinated to the will of God. "What business are you in?" was asked of a marketman. "I am in the King's business," he said, "and run a butcher shop to pay expenses." And it may have been a very profitable butcher shop which he conducted, too.

Vv. 25-32 were addressed to the anxious poor. How wonderfully Jesus pictures the tender care of the Father over His children. This passage does not mean that a man should not save money for a "rainy day." It means that if he is seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness he should not worry over material circumstances.

Jesus now explains the ideal life in regard to the treatment of others. He first points out, Matthew 7:1-5, a fault that is common to us all. Nevertheless we should distinguish between condemnation of wrong and condemnation of the wrongdoer. We are to hate sin but to love the sinner, to

fight evil but to endeavor to win the evildoer. Jesus is here condemning that harsh, unforgiving spirit which, ignorant of the circumstances and the motives which prompted the act of the guilty man, condemns him without mercy. The very fact that we are so ready to judge others shows that we have not love and kindness in our hearts. We are probably harboring instead the vice, selfish bitterness. In unkindly judging or imputing evil motives to others we, by that very act, reveal a beam of evil in our own lives which is far worse than the mote which we have condemned in others. In Matthew 7:6, Jesus is saying in an ironical, yet half-humorous way, use tact. He implies that to reason with a self-righteous, prejudiced Pharisee was like throwing pearls before pigs. It is a waste of time to reason with a self-satisfied, self-righteous man.

Read Matthew 7:7-12. Here Jesus reverses our usual idea of prayer in which we think of God as withholding blessings from us which by importunity in prayer, He may be induced reluctantly to give. God is our Father, said Jesus, and is anxiously waiting with infinite blessings to bestow upon us as soon as we are able to receive them. The difficulty is not with God but with us. We are not really seeking to receive the best from Him but want our own selfish desires gratified. Consider your habits of prayer at this time and estimate how much of your prayer is taken up in asking God to do that which you want done and how little is devoted to asking God to help you do what He wants done. He who really seeks the best, will find it. To him who knocks the door shall be opened. The reservoir of goodness is full to overflowing but the inlet of our will is choked by selfishness and sin.

As you would that God should do for you, so do you for others. Read slowly Matthew 7:12 commonly known as "The Golden Rule." Confucius has expressed the same thought in a negative way but Jesus emphasizes the positive activity of doing good to others.

"It is not an easy task to live such a life as I have pictured," said Jesus, "for the gate is narrow and the way strait, and few there be that find it." There is no elbow room for our lusts, said Matthew Henry.

Study V. Sixth Day

**The Sermon on the Mount (concluded). Matt. 7:
15-29. The Test of a Tree Is the Fruit. The
Test of a Religious Belief Is Its Value in Life**

Read Matthew 7: 15-23. After the warning in v. 15, Jesus states a very simple formula by which we can test our religious beliefs, religious organizations, or personal lives. They are to be tested by their fruits. Whatever there is, then, in your life that does not function, or enrich it, that does not satisfy some need of your soul, you may discard. But whatever is necessary for the satisfaction of the deepest needs of your life, whatever enables you to live better, whatever enriches your soul, to that hold on. For instance, no absolute proof can be given of the immortality of the soul. Some may produce arguments to show its reasonableness, others may prove it highly improbable, for one can prove almost any premise by seemingly logical arguments. What we should do is to test it out in life.

Suppose some one tells you that if you mix sodium and chlorine you will get salt. You could argue indefinitely trying to prove or disprove the statement. A more practical man interrupts your reasoning by saying, "While you were arguing, I went into the laboratory and made the experiment. Every time I mixed sodium and chlorine I got salt. You may come to any conclusion you please, but it's a fact."

If you have within you then, a feeling that surely this life does not end the existence of personality, that there must be some place where the deep longings of the soul for perfection in love and knowledge will be gratified; a feeling that if this life is all, the Creator who put us here forged a cruel joke upon us; then take those feelings, mix them with a belief in the immortality of the soul, test them together in the laboratory of life and abide by the results. If you find your life richer, happier, and nobler by a belief in the immortality of the soul, then hold to such a belief regardless of the conclusions or astute arguments of classroom philosophers.

Again, if it is necessary in order to enable you to live a

clean, honest, truthful life, to believe in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, then believe in His existence and infinite love and live your life accordingly, even though all the arguments attempting to prove the existence of God are to you inadequate and unconvincing. If, on the other hand, these beliefs do not enrich your life or improve your conduct, then we just as frankly say, you may discard them. But remember they are to be tested not in the seminar, but on the athletic field, not in the meeting of the philosophical society, but on the busy highway of life where men are burdened with sorrow and where lives are being wrecked by sin, not in the training camp but on the battlefield where only realities count.

In this passage, Jesus is rather emphasizing that if our religious beliefs, our church affiliations, and our activity in the Christian Association are not producing a life of simple unaffected goodness, then our religion is worthless. It is failing to accomplish the end for which it was intended. In other words, if we cheat in examinations, if we cut third base when the umpire isn't looking, if we are dirty in football, if we do not pay our debts, if we sell fifteen ounces as a pound, if we fail to care for a rented house as well as if it were our own, if when we left the service we knowingly carried off a government blanket which did not belong to us, if we are unkind, if we are selfish, then our religion is vain.

Read again in vv. 21-23, the words of Jesus about the last judgment. Not every one that saith unto Jesus, "Lord, Lord, I have been secretary of a Y. M. C. A. of more than five thousand members, I have taught Sunday school for years, I did not drink, or use profanity, I believed the Apostles' Creed, and the doctrines of the church, I was a regular attendant at divine worship, and regularly received the sacraments," shall enter the eternal Kingdom; for then will the Lord say, "Did all these beliefs and accomplishments produce in you a better character, did their influence appear in your common conduct, were you more honest, and kind, and considerate? Did you grow each day more conscious of the presence of God?" For "not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father who is in heaven."

This, then, is the supreme requirement of religion, that we do the will of God on earth, that we live a good life. The end of religion is character.¹

Read now Matthew 7:24-29, which is an illustration natural to a carpenter. Jesus is picturing the folly and ultimate wreck of those who hear with their ears but fail to practice with their hands, in contrast with the abiding power and joy of those who drawing on the unseen resources of the Father seek to incorporate His spirit in their lives and to live His principles in the home, in the school, and in the shop.

Study V. Seventh Day

Review

Summarize to-day the principles of Jesus, studied thus far.

This man Jesus, who lived and taught so many years ago, gave the most perfect ideal of life, as far as we know, the world has ever seen.

1. He based it all upon His consciousness of the Fatherhood of God. Jesus did not reason with men about the existence of God, any more than we would reason with a child the why and wherefore of the existence of his earthly father. He simply gave to men the fruits of His own religious experience, and by touching their lives sought to reproduce in them a similar experience. Whether we believe in a God or not, we must admit that the belief or consciousness of Jesus, that at the heart of the universe there is a loving Father, produced in Him the most perfect life, and brought from His lips the most perfect ideal of life that we can conceive of. If by living our life in the belief in God the Father we can improve our characters and enjoy to a small degree that deep certainty and inward calm of Jesus, surely it is worth the effort.

2. If God is our Father, then all men are brothers. The trifling negro cook, the elevator boy, the drunken sot, the King of England, the outcast woman, the bank president, the gen-

¹ Everyman's Religion. George Hodges. Copyrighted 1911. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York.

eral, and the buck private are all equal in the sight of God, and if we despise or disdain the least of them, we are unworthy to be called a child of God.

3. If every man is a child of God, then each one is of infinite value. The emphasis upon this is one of the distinctive contributions of Christianity to the religions of the world.

4. If God is our Father and every man our brother, then we are to love God as we do our earthly father and love every man as we do our own brother. Love, therefore, is to be the inward motive which is to dominate our life, not a soft abstract sentimentalism, but a great inward joy overflowing from our hearts in service, kindness, and righteousness toward others.

5. This idea of filial relationship changes religion from obedience to external rules to the giving of the heart to God for the indwelling and outflowing of His love. Our worship is not meant to be a task imposed on ourselves from a sense of duty. The man who acts from duty calculates how much should be done, and considering it somewhat of a hardship, is glad when it is finished. A soldier rescues a wounded comrade on the field of battle not from duty but from love. The man who acts from love is always looking for opportunities to serve, and is happiest when he is doing the most for those he loves. He can truly say,

"I give nothing as duties,
What others give as duties I give as living impulses."

Religion, then, becomes a joy when our hearts are filled with the love of God. Is it any wonder Jesus called on men to believe the "good news"?

6. The supreme requirement of religion, Jesus said, is living a good life. The test of religion is conduct, practical morality, and character. Who is it that loves God and his neighbor, and is acceptable as a member of the Kingdom? He who *does* the will of God. As James Martineau expressed it: "If I see a man living out of an inner spring of inflexible right and pliant pity; if he refuses the color of the low world around him; if his eye flashes with scorn at mean and impure things which are a jest to others; if high examples of honor and self-sacrifice bring the flush of sympathy

upon his cheek; if in his sphere of rule he plainly obeys a trust instead of enforcing an arbitrary will, and in his sphere of service takes his yoke without a groan, and does his work with thought only that it be good; I shall not pry into his closet or ask about his creed, but own him at once as the godly man. Godliness is the persistent living out an ideal preconception of the Right, the Beautiful, the Good.”¹

“By their fruits ye shall know them.”

7. The conception of Jesus of the Kingdom was conscious fellowship with God. He came not to give a collection of rules or a code for moral conduct, but came to unite our hearts in friendship with the Father. “If the Christian religion were primarily doctrinal, it might have been taught by a book instead of a person, and have offered a system instead of a saviour; . . .”² What the world needed was some one who was in vital relationship with the Father, and who by living among men could express the will of God in the language of everyday life. It needed one who by touching the lives of men could unite them in friendship with God. Thus what Jesus was, not what He said, is of primary importance. His teachings are His character expressed in words. His disciples understood and remembered so much of what He taught, because they had seen His teachings reflected to a perfect degree in His own life.

8. Jesus came, then, not as a reformer but as a revealer. He realized that men differed only in the externals, that fundamentally men always were and always would be the same. He revealed the eternal principles of God which would meet the soul needs of men to the end of time; and by the vitalizing of their purposes through friendship with the Father, the Kingdom of God would be established upon the earth.

9. The problem we have to determine when we honestly face Jesus Christ is not an intellectual problem but a moral one. There are many men to-day who do not believe in

¹ Hours of Thought (The Godly Man). James Martineau. Used by permission of the Longmans, Green, and Company. New York.

² Jesus Christ and the Christian Character. F. G. Peabody. Copyrighted 1905. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York.

Jesus as divine, or in God as the Father, not because it is mentally unsatisfactory, but because such a belief demands too much of them. They wish to indulge in some favorite sin, to compromise with wrong in order to profit in business, to live lives of selfish indulgence without any concern for the welfare of others. Some would like to teach a few hours a day, live at the University Club, attend the opera and symphonies as a guest in a society box, spend Sunday reading magazines, or playing golf at the country club, but they do not care to be bothered with the burdens of the down-trodden, the poor, the heathen, or the immigrant. "Let those who care for that kind of work, do it," they say. Should a righteous war arise they would look to their own ease and safety, avoiding sacrifice and danger. But we can never intellectually understand Jesus until our lives are surrendered to Him. The main question for every one to decide is, "Am I willing to place my life in the hands of Jesus Christ and to follow Him?" Never mind about the Atonement, the Apostles' Creed, the Immortality of the Soul, the Existence of God, or the Deity of Jesus, are you willing to live your life according to His principles, and die for them if necessary? When you have decided this question in the affirmative, you have opened the door to a proper intellectual understanding of the Master.

"Verily, I say unto you, They have received their reward." Perhaps no words of Jesus have more tragedy packed into them than these. Most men can achieve any desired end within the range of possibility if they are willing to pay the price for it. Some men determine to gain wealth at any cost. Truly, they attain their desire, but the price is great. They find that in their mad determination to acquire wealth, they have warped their characters, they have cramped their souls, they have neglected their families, and they have lost their appreciation of the beautiful. Then their wealth palls upon them. Many college students, in their rush to achieve class positions, or athletic honors, neglect their spiritual life to such an extent that it dies. They receive their reward in transient honors, but the price they pay in spiritual realities is too high.

STUDY VI. FIRST DAY

The Friends and Family of Jesus Think He Is Mentally Unbalanced. The Scribes Call Him the Prince of the Devils. The Eternal Sin. Mark 3: 19b-35; Matt. 12: 22-50; Luke 8: 19-21, 11: 14-36

Read Mark 3: 19b-21, 31-35. True prophets, political, social, or religious, have always been considered fanatics, fools, or cranks. The family of Jesus hearing of His defiance of the priests and His authoritative attitude as a teacher, concluded that He was losing His mental balance. Feeling ashamed of the embarrassing situation in which the family was placed, they came to Capernaum to take Him home, hoping that the quiet of Nazareth would bring Him to His senses. How hard this must have been for Jesus when His own family thought Him crazy. Notice His quiet rebuke in vv. 34-35. Any man who determines to do the will of God without question may expect to be called a fanatic.

A classmate of Weston Harding remarked, when Harding left America for the East, that any man who went to China as a missionary was a fool. This opinion was probably confirmed in the mind of the classmate when two years later, Harding died in China at the age of twenty-two. But the father of Harding remarked, with quivering lips, as he read the letters from the teachers and students at St. John's, "We did not realize until now the value of what we were giving up, but we are glad that we had him to give."

The Pharisees, however, had a different explanation to make to the crowd. "This man," they said, "cures these demoniacs and speaks so authoritatively because he is inspired by Beezebub, the prince of devils himself." Read Mark 3: 22-27.

Notice the illustration of Jesus to show the fallacy of their statement and then read in vv. 28-30 the awful doom pronounced against such an attitude as the Pharisees had assumed. "Does the language indicate that a man might repent and fail of forgiveness? Or that he might never repent? Consider the force of the last clause in v. 29.

"In looking at the impressive limitation to forgiveness, do not overlook the broad proclamation of forgiveness in v. 28. These rabbis had, through a process of development which it would be interesting to try to trace, come to the point where they could face what the world recognizes as the most profound manifestation of God in human history and call it a devil! Jesus was devoutly conscious that the Spirit of God in Him enabled Him to do His beneficent works, but that Spirit they called Beelzebub! They were in danger of settling down into eternal fixity in sin, all the more awful because they felt no solicitude about themselves. If they had felt solicitude about themselves, or any regret for their action, it would have been clear that they had not committed the so-called unpardonable sin. The thing to be dreaded is the beginning of the process by which this fixity in sin comes to be.

"The great law of the spiritual world is that persistent failure to accept truth or do duty results in the loss of the capacity to see that truth or duty. From him that has not the willingness to do truth, shall be taken away, by natural psychological processes, the power to apprehend the truth. It will become evident later that the fundamental difficulty with these rabbis was their selfishness. They were more or less consciously, but nevertheless really, unwilling to recognize the superiority of Jesus' conception of religion to their own because they saw that if His conception of the Kingdom prevailed, their social and ecclesiastical prestige would be gone." ¹

"Stand still, my soul, in the silent dark
I would question thee,
Alone in the shadow, drear and stark,
With God and me!

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

“What, my soul, was thy errand here?
Was it mirth or ease,
Or heaping up dust from year to year?
‘Nay, none of these!’

“Speak, soul, aright in His holy sight,
Whose eye looks still
And steadily on thee through the night:
‘To do His will!’

“What hast thou done, O soul of mine,
That thou tremblest so? —
Has thou wrought His task, kept the line
He bade thee go?

“Leaning on Him, make with reverent meekness
His own thy will,
And with strength from Him shall thy utter weakness
Life’s task fulfill.”

WHITTIER, “My Soul and I.”

Study VI. Second Day

The Eternal Sin (concluded). Read Again Mark 3:28-30

George Adam Smith said: “A man by decree of Almighty God has in his own hand the power to make his life or to blast it; he may live on in indifference, in indulgence of open sin, in bitterness of heart, in denial of God, until his will loses the power to accept pardon. Yet God waits with yearning love for the prodigal to come home. There are, alas, prodigals innumerable who cannot return; prodigals who have lost the power to take the first step on the homeward journey. The appeal to pride is of little avail, for there is hardly a spark of self-respecting pride left; the call to conscience only bores them, for their conscience is stone deaf; the love and anguish of the Father’s heart evokes at best only a sentimental tear; through the human world of unspeakable riches, they wander with empty souls.” “The peril and terror of love,” he continues, “is that it may be to a man either Heaven

or Hell. Believe then in hell, because you believe in the Love of God—not in a hell to which God condemns men of His will and pleasure, but a hell into which men cast themselves from the very face of His love in Jesus Christ. The place has been painted as a place of fires. But when we contemplate that men come to it with the holiest flames in their nature quenched, we shall justly feel that it is rather a dreary waste of ash and cinder, strewn with snow—some ribbed and frosted Arctic zone, silent in death, for there is no life there, and there is no life there because there is no Love, and no Love because men in rejecting or abusing her have slain their own power ever again to feel her presence.”¹

The unpardonable sin has also been described, “as the attitude of self-centered indifference to the voice of God speaking evermore within us.”

“No word of doom may shut thee out,
No wind of wrath may downward whirl,
No swords of fire keep watch about
The open gates of pearl;

“A tenderer light than moon or sun,
Than song of earth a sweeter hymn,
May shine and sound forever on,
And thou be deaf and dim.

“Forever round the Mercy-seat
The guiding lights of Love shall burn;
But what if, habit-bound, thy feet
Shall lack the will to turn?

“What if thine eye refuse to see,
Thine ear of Heaven’s free welcome fail,
And thou a willing captive be,
Thyself thy own dark jail?

“O doom beyond the saddest guess,
As the long years of God unroll
To make thy dreary selfishness
The prison of a soul!”

WHITTIER, “The Answer.”

¹ The Book of the Twelve Prophets. George Adam Smith. Copyright. Used by permission of the George H. Doran Company. New York. Publishers.

Study VI. Third Day

Jesus Begins to Teach in Parables. Mark 4: 1-2, 9-13; Matt. 13: 1-3, 10-17; Luke 8: 9-10, 16-18

When Jesus found some people determined not to receive His message, He changed His method of teaching from the plain statement of fact as found in the Sermon on the Mount to the parabolic method. This method "presents truth in an exceedingly thought-provoking and effective way to one who cares for truth, but in a way which tells nothing to one who does not want to know truth and has forfeited his right to it."¹ Read Mark 4: 1-2, 10-13, 21-25.

4: 12 reads as if Jesus did not want the people to understand. He is quoting from Isaiah 6: 9-10 in which Isaiah, in writing the account of his call, gives the results of his message as he looks back to the beginning of his prophetic work. The effect of the message of Jesus upon men was the same as that of Isaiah. It will ever happen that men who refuse to see or hear the truth will become spiritually blind and deaf, although still possessing mental eyes and ears.

Lest the disciples should misunderstand the purpose of the parables, Jesus explains in vv. 21-25 that He would not try to conceal the truth any more than He would, in order to scatter the darkness, light a lamp and put it under a bushel. The truth will eventually triumph, said Jesus. If any one wishes to hear the truth, let him listen with an open mind and he will hear. It is the law of growth that whosoever sincerely follows the truth that he has, to him will be revealed more truth, but whosoever refuses to follow the truth will lose even the truth that he has and also his very power of apprehending truth. "The soul that is loyal to the truth as far as he sees it, is the soul that has the power to see further."

Are you full of intellectual difficulties and sometimes in despair, doubtful of everything? Then do the right, and not the wrong. Follow the light you have. In the humble path

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

of rightdoing, many of your problems will solve themselves. Each step of your journey will open up wider vistas of truth as the road becomes firmer and more distinct.

Study VI. Fourth Day

The Parables of the Sower, the Growing Crop, and the Mustard Seed. Mark 4: 3-9, 14-20, 26-32; Matt. 13: 3-9, 18-23, 31-32; Luke 8: 4-8, 11-15

Read Mark 4: 3-9, 14-20. Remember in reading these parables that in each one, Jesus usually illustrated only one principal truth and did not intend to give a meaning to every detail. In the parable of the sower, Jesus makes a most profound classification of men. "He had seen persons stop on the edge of the crowd, attracted for the moment by something He said, and then drift thoughtlessly on; He had seen people give assent to His teaching and be persecuted out of their interest in Him by the rabbis of their home communities; He had seen anxious, careworn faces of men and women engrossed in other things than the truth about the Kingdom; He had also seen those who took time for candid attention to the truth, and in them was His hope."¹

Read Mark 4: 26-29. Jesus here indicated the gradual growth of the Kingdom in contrast with the spectacular inauguration commonly expected by the Jews. Many earnest people seem to become impatient and discouraged when reactions arise after movements for reform, or when there is a lack of response to the call of higher things. Let us realize that the coming of the Kingdom is an evolutionary process, rising higher, like the tide, by slow degrees. Notice in this parable "the confidence of Jesus, in spite of apparent comparative failure. He had not won the religious leaders at all, and it is more than probable that the crowds attracted to Him . . . would have fallen away had they realized how little their popular conception of the Kingdom of Heaven agreed with that of Jesus. He had not dared to declare His

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

Messiahship to them, yet He appears here absolutely confident of the final outcome. *Truth* had been planted in men's minds, ideas had been lodged there, and He felt like a farmer who goes his way by day and sleeps soundly at night when once his crop is in." ¹

Read Mark 4:30-32. Here Jesus is illustrating the rapid growth and marvelous development of the Kingdom in seemingly insignificant individual lives.

"Although the mustard seed is the smallest of garden seeds, it grows about the Sea of Galilee to be almost a tree in which birds can build nests, and comes to be quite out of the class of garden herbs." ¹

Many people still vaguely think that the Kingdom of God is to come and in some way associate it with a great procession of waving banners and prancing horses. The Kingdom of God in the mind of Jesus is an inward, spiritual Kingdom which consists in the rule of God over the individual life. The Kingdom grows as men come into fellowship with the Father. The description of the motives and actions of the members of the Kingdom is found in the Sermon on the Mount and throughout the life and teachings of Jesus. Its ideal is Jesus Himself. Its ultimate and complete development will mean the transformation of society into a race of brotherly sons of God in whom the brotherhood of man through obedience to the will of God the Father will be completely realized.

Study VI. Fifth Day

Parables of the Kingdom in the Thirteenth Chapter of Matthew. Matt. 13:24-30, 33, 36-50; Luke

17:20-21

Read Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50. These parables illustrate the same thought, one spoken probably among peasants and farmers, the other, to a group of fishermen.

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"Tares, or zizanium, resemble wheat in the early stages of growth, but are easily distinguishable at maturity. The zizanium is a poisonous narcotic which causes dizziness and nausea if it by mistake gets into the bread. . . .

"The great drag-net usually was out all day, and at evening the fishermen drew it in and sat down on the beach to sort the fish." ¹

Jesus here "deals with the problem of evil which so deeply stirred the soul of the author of Job." ² The disciples also were probably becoming impatient at the slowness of Jesus in inaugurating the Messianic judgment. In the fulness of time, said Jesus, the judgment would come. Let evil and good grow side by side. To attempt to root out the evil by force would injure even the good. Jesus is here teaching that broad tolerance which so characterized His life.² Do not become impatient and irritated at those who ridicule religion or block the path of the right. Be kind, stand for the right, and in time, God will bring it to pass.

The explanation in Matthew 13:36-43 reflects, the writer believes, the later eschatological ideas of the early Christian church such as frequently occur in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus was concerned primarily with the present. The future world would take care of itself.²

Read Matthew 13:33. Jesus is here illustrating "the pervading and assimilating power of the kingdom of God." ³ The silent influence of a Christlike life slowly but surely permeates its environment.

Read Matthew 13:44-46. Notice in the first parable, the treasure is found accidentally, and in the second, it is sought for purposely. In each case the man sold all that he had in order to attain the prize. Thus Jesus emphasizes that everything in life is of insignificant value in comparison with membership in the Kingdom.

Read Luke 17:20-21 in which Jesus expresses the fact that

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² The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

³ The Teaching of Jesus. H. H. Wendt. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

the Kingdom is not external and material, but inward and spiritual. It consists neither in ritual nor organization, nor profession, but in inward fellowship with God.

Study VI. Sixth Day

The Miracle of Stilling the Tempest, the Gerasene Demoniac, the Daughter of Jairus, and the Woman with the Issue of Blood. Mark 4: 35-5: 43

Read Mark 4: 35-5: 43 and refer later to the discussion of the miracles in Study XV. Sending the devils into the swine is probably the only recorded miracle of Jesus which is, to the mind of the writer, quite inconsistent with His nature. Almost every miracle recorded was performed by Jesus for some moral purpose or arose from His compassion for the afflicted. It would be hard to believe, on the basis of any explanation we can think of, that Jesus would deliberately destroy two thousand swine, which were the means of livelihood of many people, who from their point of view were engaged in a legitimate business, even though such an occupation was repulsive to the Jews. Notice 5: 34, 39 which will be referred to in a later chapter.

Read again 5: 18-20. Instead of permitting the demoniac whom He had cured to go with Him, Jesus sends him back to his native town to tell his family and friends what had been done for him.

It is very difficult for us at times to talk with our own relatives and intimate friends about their personal religious life. Yet the world will never be won for Christ until every follower realizes that he is an evangelist for the Master. Many people will contribute largely to a professional evangelistic campaign in order to put upon the shoulders of the evangelist their own responsibility for winning their friends. Have you ever spoken to your brother, your sister, your laboratory partner, your business associate, your fraternity brother, or the fellow who plays guard on the football team beside you, about his personal religious life?

THE COMMAND

- "I said, 'Let us walk in the fields.'
He said, 'No, walk in the town.'
I said, 'There are no flowers there.'
He said, 'No flowers, but a crown.'
- "I said, 'But the skies are black;
There is nothing but noise and din';
And he wept as he sent me back;
'There is more,' he said, 'there is sin.'
- "I said, 'But the air is thick,
And fogs are veiling the sun.'
He answered, 'Yet souls are sick,
And souls in the dark undone.'
- "I said, 'I shall miss the light,
And friends will miss me, they say.'
He answered, 'Choose to-night
If I am to miss you, or they.'
- "I pleaded for time to be given.
He said, 'Is it hard to decide?
It will not seem hard in Heaven
To have followed the steps of your Guide.'"
- GEORGE MACDONALD.

Study VI. Seventh Day

Review

We have now reached the point in the life of Jesus when the opposition of the religious leaders has grown so bitter that they call Him Beelzebub incarnate, and His family think Him mentally unbalanced. On account of this bitter prejudice, Jesus begins to teach in parables. In Mark 3:28-30, He utters a solemn warning about the peril of seeing the truth and failing to accept it. Coningsby Dawson wrote from France, February sixth, nineteen hundred and seventeen: "I read in to-day's paper that U. S. A. threatens to come over and help us. I wish she would. . . . Somewhere deep down in

my heart I've felt a sadness ever since I've been out here, at America's lack of gallantry—it's so easy to find excuses for not climbing to Calvary; sacrifice was always too noble to be sensible. I would like to see the country of our adoption become splendidly irrational even at this eleventh hour in the game; it would redeem her in the world's eyes. She doesn't know what she's losing. From these carcass-strewn fields of khaki there's a cleansing wind blowing for the nations that have died. Though there was only one Englishman left to carry on the race when this war is victoriously ended, I would give more for the future of England than for the future of America with her ninety millions whose sluggish blood was not stirred by the call of duty. It's bigness of soul that makes nations great and not population."¹ The tragedy of student conferences and volunteer conventions is, that students, though catching a glimpse of true self-devotion from the mountain peaks of God, deliberately turn their backs to the view and ignore the voice of the Father speaking within their hearts for His children in need. It would have been better for these students never to have known the truth or to have seen the vision, than for them to know the truth and not to follow it, or to hear the call of God and not obey it.

1. Notice in Mark 3:35 those who may claim relationship with Christ. So simple yet so profound is the statement, and so often repeated that it runs like a refrain through His whole life, "whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Are you a relative of His?

2. Notice Mark 4:30-32. Humble lives when transformed by the power of God become great. David Livingstone, the weaver boy, is buried in Westminster Abbey. Moody, the uneducated country lad, once a clerk in a shoe store, perhaps more profoundly and permanently influenced the world than any other man of his time. "The world has never seen," said Mr. Moody, "what God can do with a man whose life is completely surrendered to Him." Have we surrendered our lives? If the Kingdom of God is so great a transforming energy, have you ever considered its worth to you?

3. Your valuation of Christ can be determined largely by

¹ Carry On. Coningsby Dawson. Copyrighted 1917. Used by permission of the John Lane Company. New York.

your desire to share your religious life with others. Many Christian students and some student volunteers expect in time to become fervent evangelists. However, the first place to manifest such an interest is in their own home and among their intimate friends.

4. "And the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

"Worldliness consists in forgetting the ends of life in absorption in the means. The business man who gives his whole thought to making money without learning to use it well, the ambitious politician who spends his life in seeking office without thinking how through the office he may serve the people, the woman who devotes her days to dressmakers and milliners, all those whose minds are occupied with the mere instruments and mechanism of life, are choked with the tares of worldliness. They may live on a higher plane than the idler or *débauché*; they may escape the worst pitfalls of life; but they do not attain to its highest rewards. The unworldly man sees deeper into life, lays hold of the eternal things; if he seeks wealth or fame, or cultivates society, it is for the ideal ends he can attain there-through, for the better service of his fellows or of God."¹

¹ The Problems of Religion. Durant Drake. Copyrighted 1916. Used by permission of the Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston.

STUDY VII. FIRST DAY

Jesus Visits Nazareth. Mark 6: 1-6; Matt. 13: 54-58; Luke 4: 16-30

After a time, Jesus decided to visit His mother and His other relatives at Nazareth. Here, "He had worked at His trade for so many years [but now He returns], a famous prophet with disciples who look to Him as their rabbi. He arrives some time during the week, visits in the homes of His married sisters and brothers, passes here and there the houses He has built, and on the Sabbath goes into the old synagogue of His boyhood days. Read Mark 6: 1-6 with active imagination.

"The word 'offended' in v. 3 means 'caused to stumble.' That is, they found something in Jesus that tripped them like the trigger of a trap and so snared them that they did not proceed to accord Him the welcome which He received elsewhere. Why did not the villagers give the prophet a hearty welcome? . . . Notice the sad situation implied in the last words of v. 4." ¹

Notice in v. 5 the words, "could not," which will be referred to in the study on Miracles. This seems to imply that faith was necessary to the operation of the healing power of Jesus.

"What a blessing to Nazareth, to its sick and discouraged, to its little children, the home-coming of Jesus might have been! If we are ever tempted to be jealous we need to remember that the jealous man always does an injury to his own nature, and may in addition deprive himself of some great specific good." ¹

It is sad that the real appreciation of many great men has

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

first come from a people not their own. Thus it has been in art, science, and literature; here we have the supreme example in religion.

Study VII. Second Day

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve. Mark 6: 7-13; Matt. 10: 5-42; Luke 9: 1-6

Jesus, at this point, sent out the disciples on a tour of preaching, very likely to develop them for future service. He was not particularly concerned, at this time, with the further extension of His message. He was more concerned in developing His disciples for leadership after His earthly life was ended. The tour was to be a short one and the principal theme of their message was probably the immediate approach of the Kingdom.

They were to go meagerly equipped, probably because "it was a picturesque and symbolical way of saying, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand!' It was as though a man without hat or coat or shoes should ride down the valley telling the villagers that the reservoir in the hills had broken its banks. Do you see other reasons for their meager equipment?

"They were not to go from house to house engaging in the protracted and time-consuming social functions of the oriental village, but were to stay with one family and be constantly about their business (v. 10) . . .

"If any village did not receive their message regarding the nearness of the Kingdom, they were to employ the common symbolism of the east and shake off every particle of dust from their sandals. This would show that they regarded the village as doomed and wished no particle of it to adhere to their persons. Their action and dress were suggestive of the picturesque symbolism in manner and dress often employed by the prophets of old. Indeed, these men were very like prophets in their message and services." ¹

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

Study VII. Third Day

**The Instructions of Jesus to the Twelve. Matt.
10: 16-42**

Matthew's habit of grouping discourses logically related, is seen again in the preliminary instructions of Jesus to the disciples in Matthew 10: 16-42.

The whole discourse breathes the atmosphere of the early church, yet the central thoughts are probably those of Jesus. Vv. 16-23 are clearly a description of the conditions of the early church, and yet how often have vv. 21-22 been repeated over and over again as the cross of Christ has steadily advanced in the world.

Read vv. 24-25 and realize that Jesus did not ask His followers to do anything which He Himself did not do. He does not direct from the rear. His commands are not, "Advance to yonder point!" but always, "Follow Me!"

Vv. 32-33 have been often misconstrued by many sincere people. "To confess Christ" was to speak in the young peoples' meeting, or to lead in public prayer. To keep silence after the meeting was opened for testimony was "to be ashamed of or to deny Christ." We deny Christ not by our inaptitude or inability to speak in a public religious meeting; we deny Him by playing dirty football, by cheating in examinations, by living self-centered lives of easy indulgence, by gambling, by wasting our money and our time, by compromising with evil, by failing to offer our lives when duty clearly calls.

"Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Read 10: 34. Jesus here expresses membership in the Kingdom in terms of active warfare. Try to abolish the vice district, or destroy the "pork-barrel" of corrupt politicians, and you will realize that Jesus came not to send peace but a sword. To live right means a struggle. To fight entrenched evil may even result in death.

*Study VII. Fourth Day***The Instructions of Jesus to the Twelve (concluded). Matt. 10:16-42**

Read Matthew 10:35-39. The followers of Christ in non-Christian lands realize the truth of vv. 35-36. To us, it is those who are afraid to fight for civic reforms for fear of offending associates in business, those who set aside the call of foreign missions on account of the selfish opposition of parents and friends, who are not worthy of Christ.

Read 10:37. Jesus does not tell any one to neglect his family, or, after assuming the obligations of married life, to neglect wife and children to do religious work. No one was more concerned with the proper care of the family than Jesus. The circumstance that the name of Joseph is not mentioned in any accounts except those of the early life of Jesus probably indicates that Joseph died when Jesus was very young. Until His brothers were grown, Jesus was, no doubt, the main support of His family. John says that, even on the cross, He did not forget to provide for the care of His mother. It is those who are turned aside from doing the will of God by selfish considerations of family that Jesus is here addressing.

"He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me." Jesus follows this statement with that in v. 39, one of those paradoxical utterances in which He expresses a great truth in few words. He who throws his life into some great cause with reckless abandon finds his inward life enriched and deepened. He who seeks the easy life, rather than the best, finds his soul clogged with fatty degeneration. Horace Tracy Pitkin threw away his life in China when he might have lived for years in a comfortable home in America. But in losing his life in China, he found that inward enrichment of life which comes only through doing the will of God. "Lao-man," he said, to the faithful Chinese as he realized that death was near, "tell the mother of little Horace to tell Horace that his father's last wish was that when he is twenty-five years of age, he should come to China as a missionary."

Coningsby Dawson wrote from the battlefield in France in nineteen hundred and sixteen, "Yet, for all the damnability of what I now witness, I was never quieter in my heart. To have surrendered to an imperative self-denial brings a peace which self-seeking never brought," and again in nineteen hundred and seventeen, "This war is a prolonged moment of exultation for most of us—we are redeeming ourselves in our own eyes. To lay down one's life for one's friend once seemed impossible. All that is altered. We lay down our lives that the future generations may be good and kind, and so we can contemplate oblivion with quiet eyes."¹

Jesus emphasizes again, in the foregoing verses, that doing the will of God should come first in the life of a man. Neither business, family considerations, social position, nor selfish desires should be allowed to interfere.

Read 10:40-42. In v. 42, Jesus glorifies the simple, everyday acts of kindness and courtesy. Many so-called Christian men are inconsiderate of their wives. They are liberal to the poor, they are courteous in public, they are good churchmen, they speak from the pulpit occasionally, but they fail to show that unselfish kindness which should animate the everyday routine of domestic and public life.

Many men quiet their consciences by giving to charitable organizations, homes for the outcast, and newsboys' clubs, while paying their employees less than a living wage, and tolerating corrupt practices, which aid in producing degraded conditions. The "little ones" of Jesus are not only the children but the underfed, the over-worked, the ignorant, and the handicapped, who bear more than their share of taxation, and carry the burdens of an unjust industrial system.²

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² The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

*Study VII. Fifth Day***The Execution of John the Baptist. Mark 6: 14-29; Matt. 14: 1-12; Luke 9: 7-9**

The fame of Jesus spread even to the court of Herod. The effect on Herod gave Mark an opportunity to insert an account of the beheading of John the Baptist which occurred perhaps soon after Jesus began His ministry.

John, the fearless prophet of the wilderness, dared to denounce the sin of Herod even to his face. Herod had, living with him, the wife of his brother. The finger of the prophet had been pointed at the ruler in accusation. The sensual Herod had trembled before John with a smitten conscience. The effect on his unlawful wife was almost entirely the opposite. Herodias, the crafty, voluptuous, ambitious woman was filled with relentless hatred toward the prophet and determined to kill him. Read Mark 6: 14-29.

Picture the scene in the court at the time of the birthday feast. The sumptuous food, the flowing wine, the blazing lights, the gorgeous apparel gave an effect of magnificence. While flushed with wine, the sensual dancing of the daughter of his brother brings forth from Herod the extravagant promise in v. 22. This promise presented an opportunity for which Herodias had been looking. She told her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist.

Perhaps the noblest and best types of human beings, and at the same time the lowest and most degraded, are to be found among women. It has been remarked that a woman can love, a woman can hate, a woman can be an angel, a woman can be a devil.

While the drunken revelry fills the banquet hall, the creaking of a cell door is heard in another part of the castle; then comes the sharp thud of the executioner's ax, and the Herald of the Kingdom of God is no more.

"Imagine the spiteful woman and her daughter looking at the ghastly head and blood-clotted hair of the great prophet. What an end for the greatest of God's prophets! A bad man is made over into a loyal son of God, and a bad world is made

over into the Kingdom of God, only through suffering, and to each one who would give himself with abandon to the enterprise some measure of the suffering will be meted out.”¹

Study VII. Sixth Day

The Feeding of the Five Thousand, Walking on the Water, and a Visit to Gennesaret. Mark 6: 30-56; Matt. 14: 13-36; Luke 9: 10-17

Read Mark 6: 30-44. The disciples returned and told Jesus of the work they had done on their tour of preaching. As people were continually interrupting, Jesus took His disciples apart into a desert place.

What an ideal program for our own lives this is. First, to receive instructions from Jesus; then, to set about to do His bidding; lastly, to return to tell Him all we have done or tried to do and to receive strength by resting awhile in quiet with Him.

Mark follows this with an account of the feeding of the great multitude. It is no wonder that the heart of Jesus overflowed with compassion as He looked at the crowd. They were seeking they knew not what. How He longed for them to realize in their lives the highest ideals; how He longed for them to be filled with real joy; how He longed to bring them into fellowship with the Father; but they would not.

This miracle is discussed in Study XV. At this time note that it is evident from v. 37 that the previous miracles of Jesus had not so impressed the disciples that they thought He could actually feed five thousand people with little or no provision.

Whatever our view of the miracles, let us not lose the spiritual value contained in them. In the feeding of the five thousand, notice “that Jesus made His apostles feel responsibility for feeding the crowd (v. 37); made them take account of all their resources (v. 38); made them bring all their

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

very meager resources to Him (v. 41); and then through His blessing made these resources more than adequate to the need (vv. 42-43). The five thin cakes of bread and the two little dried fish answered abundantly.”¹ Read Mark 6:45-56.

“‘He gave to the disciples to set before them.’ The supreme values that we have to give our friends are the things that come to us from association with Jesus Christ. Whether we have much to offer them day by day depends upon what we are getting of thought and inspiration day by day from Him. The more we give, the more we have. When the crowd was satisfied, each apostle found his own basket full (v. 43).”¹

Study VII. Seventh Day

Review

1. Jesus was rejected at Nazareth because His own boyhood friends and the older people who had known Him since infancy were jealous of His fame. Do you discount the success of your friends on account of jealousy by saying it was “pull,” or “bootlicking,” or “crookedness,” which pushed them to the front? Would you do everything you could to get a man out for football if you knew he would beat you out for the team? Are you working as hard for the success of the team notwithstanding that, although deserving the captaincy, you were defeated by “college politics”?

2. Jesus sent forth His disciples, although He could have done the work much better Himself. Let us realize in our Christian work that we are not to develop a program, we are to develop men. The ideal Christian worker is not the man who can only do the work himself; he is the man who can also get others to work.

3. Some students, it is true, fail to confess Christ because of cowardice. They have stood with the other crowd so long that they lack the courage to stand out openly before the world as a follower of Him.

4. Would you give up a life work as a missionary in China

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or India if your father were to disinherit you for volunteering?

5. The trouble with most men is that they do not undertake work sufficiently large. They are contented with an easy task, and cease to progress. Be sure the life work you have planned is large enough for you to lose yourself in it. Henry Martyn wrote in his diary, two days after beginning his ministry to the natives and Europeans of North India, "I have hitherto lived to little purpose, more like a clod than a servant of God; now let me burn up for God." Those who burn up for God in business, law, preaching, teaching, plumbing, or printing, find themselves really living.

"That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it;
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it."

BROWNING.

6. Is it better to break a bad promise or to keep it?

7. Jesus goes to the mountain top to pray but descends quickly to aid His disciples in distress. Let us realize that our educational advantages are not to make us feel superior to others; we should descend from every mountain top of opportunity for service in the valley of life.

STUDY VIII. FIRST DAY

Jesus Refutes the Casuistry of the Rabbis. Mark 7: 1-23; Matt. 15: 1-20

Read Mark 7: 1-23. "The 'tradition' was the inherited explanation of the law. The later view of its origin was that God gave it on Mt. Sinai, either in written or oral form, but that much of it was afterward lost and had to be restored by the rabbis. The older view was that God gave simply the law on Mt. Sinai, which involved the 'tradition,' or that He gave orally the leading principles of the tradition. Practically, the tradition was regarded as more important than Scripture, because tradition contained all the precepts of the law in the form in which they had to be obeyed in order to secure salvation. An instance of the tradition was the requirement that persons coming from the market where they might have involuntarily touched persons or things connected with pagan worship, or other religiously defiling objects, must purify themselves. . . . It was [also] possible for a man to say that a piece of property was 'Korban' or 'given to God' so far as a certain person was concerned, meaning by this not that the property would actually be given to the temple, but only that so far as the person mentioned was concerned, the property was to be considered as though given to the temple. The reference here is to a person who pronounces 'Korban' over all his property so far as his father is concerned (v. 11), thus casting off all responsibility for his father's support. Apparently he was then not allowed to reassume his father's support if he wished to do so (v. 12)."¹

These Pharisees, then, came to Jesus with the objection that His disciples were eating with hands ceremonially unclean.

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

They did not accuse the disciples of dishonesty or fraud in securing the bread. The crime consisted in the manner in which the bread was eaten.

It is not strange that Jesus became impatient with such quibbling as this. The deep principles of the law were neglected by these Pharisees. Read again the reply of Jesus in Mark 7:6-13. The trouble with the Pharisees was that they attempted to deceive themselves and others by living legally correct lives notwithstanding the fact that they continually violated the fundamental spirit of the law. Imagine a man parading before the community as righteous and honorable while neglecting his parents in need, and justifying such an action on the ground of some legal technicality. Yet to-day men lie and steal, and try to justify themselves with the excuse that it is legal. How many men bargain with a man for one thing, and then trick him into signing a paper for something else. How many lawyers do everything legally in their power to defeat the ends of justice for a dishonest client. How many legislators who would not receive a bribe, accept a yearly retainer's fee from a corporation or individual, when they know it is only their legislative influence that is paid for. How many college students violate the spirit of eligibility rules by flimsy technicalities. Legality is not a justification for a wrong deed. Neither ritual, tradition, custom, nor laws can make right a fraud.

Read now Mark 7:14-23. The last clause of v. 19 is an insertion by Mark which gives a hint as to the date of the Gospel. See Acts 10:14.

Jesus, in these verses, again emphasizes the fact that the motives and thoughts of a man primarily determine his character. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The laws of society punish the act. Jesus went deeper and decided the penalty by the inward motive.

Here Jesus again emphasizes that religious worship, church membership, orthodoxy of belief are not to be made into fetishes. They are worthless unless they produce within us kindness, justice, and honor.

Last of all, Jesus emphasizes that He came not to teach us a collection of rules or a code of maxims which we are to apply to the details of conduct. He came to make men pure

and true. "What he taught," said Robert Louis Stevenson, "was not a code of rules, but a loving spirit; not truths, but a spirit of truth; not views, but a view."¹

He came to give us eternal principles of life and to relate us to God. If a man's life was inwardly right, Jesus did not concern Himself over the man's maxims of conduct. Let us not leave the commandments of God and hold fast the tradition of men.

"Jesus esteemed the great things of life to be the commonplace things. No religious system, no matter how gorgeous its paraphernalia, how refined its metaphysical distinctions, or how minute its rules of righteousness, could stand before Him for a moment if it failed in the simple point of honor to parents. Religion and life were inseparable, and life was at its fullest in such elemental personal relationships as those between parent and child. Have you ever definitely reflected upon what is due the parent from the child, and carefully considered whether you are really 'honoring' your father and mother? What is it to 'honor' a person?"²

Study VIII. Second Day

Jesus Leaves Galilee and Spends His Time with the Disciples in the Outside Provinces. Mark

7:24-30; Matt. 11:20-24

At this point, Jesus reached a crisis in His life. After a period of great popularity, His teachings became so offensive to the religious leaders that (Mark 3:6) they determined to kill Him. The opposition grew in intensity until the Pharisees proclaimed Him Beelzebub, in order to turn the masses against Him. Finally Herod himself became suspicious, and Jesus determined to leave Galilee in order that His work as well as Himself might not perish at this time. The woes in Matthew

¹ Quoted from *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*. F. G. Peabody. The Macmillan Company. New York.

² *Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ*. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

11:20-24 were probably pronounced during these days. Read Matthew 11:20-24.

"It was not a curse which Jesus pronounced upon these scenes of his activity; it was rather a statement of fact put in the characteristic oriental form of a lament. A great opportunity had come to their citizens, but most of them had rejected it. Jesus had longed and labored to lay in these favored centers the corner-stone of God's kingdom on earth. He had sought to banish from their streets all pain and ignorance and sin. He had yearned to teach young and old alike how they might find that peace and joy and fullness of life which he knew would be theirs if they would but turn from their sins and follies and learn to love and serve their heavenly Father with all their powers and their neighbors as themselves. Here he had hoped to found a perfect community. Jesus' words reveal the intensity of his desire to realize this ideal and his tragic sense of failure.

"Apparently only once, and possibly only for a few hours, did he return to Capernaum. His task from this time on was to perfect the training and the faith of the few who were loyal to him. In accomplishing this task, private conversation takes the place of public address. Deliberate choice, as well as necessity, led him to seek for this new work a quiet field beyond the authority of Herod Antipas where the leaven of the Pharisees could not permeate. This place of temporary refuge was found among the lofty hills of upper Galilee, in closest touch with the land and people whom Jesus loved, but out of reach of his foes." ¹

Study VIII. Third Day

Jesus Cures a Deaf-Mute, Feeds the Four Thousand, and Warns the Disciples Against Insincerity. Mark 7:31-8:21; Matt. 15:29-16:12

Read Mark 7:31-8:10. We shall not discuss these records of curing the deaf-mute and feeding the four thousand at this

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

time. Notice in passing, the method of Jesus in curing the mute, vv. 33-34.

Read Mark 8: 11-21. Jesus sighed deeply in spirit. Is it not marvelous that Jesus did not quit His work in despair? He had spoken the truth to men, He had lived a life of loving service among them, but men were so selfish and so blinded by greed that many could not comprehend His mission. Many scorned Him, and those whose possessions were endangered by His message were willing to attempt any expedient to crush Him.

These Pharisees in vv. 11-13 did not openly antagonize Jesus but under the guise of a reasonable question tried to alienate His followers. "You have made many striking statements," they said, "and in order that we may know you are from God, give us a sign. Let a voice come from the clouds; or, do you throw yourself from the housetop without injury." They would not have believed, if both events had taken place. It was not the truth, but the destruction of Jesus, that they were seeking. They pretended to ask a sincere question, but their motives were insincere. This pretense, this hypocrisy was probably what Jesus warned His disciples against in vv. 14-21. "The figure of leaven was well chosen. It was hidden, pervasive, contagious, and transforming. It suggests the shrug of the shoulder, the sarcastic question, the poisonous libel whereby these now sworn foes of Jesus endeavored to destroy the effect of his work with the people."¹

Yet the disciples are spiritually dull. "Is it because we have no bread that He speaks about yeast?" they ask among themselves. There is a note of sad disappointment in vv. 17 and 21. "Do you not perceive either?" said Jesus. "Is there no one, no one, who understands?" Is it any wonder that Jesus spent an entire night with His Father in prayer?

Mark 8: 11-21 throws interesting light on the miracles. If all the miracles had occurred literally, as is commonly supposed, the writer does not believe that the Pharisees would have asked for a sign in order to alienate the followers of Jesus, when so many signs had already been given. It also seems that the feeding of the multitude did not so impress

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the disciples but that they wondered if Jesus were condemning them for not bringing bread for the trip when He mentioned the leaven of the Pharisees.¹ These points are discussed in detail in Study XV.

Study VIII. Fourth Day

Jesus Cures a Blind Man. The Confession of Peter.

Mark 8: 22-30; Matt. 16: 13-20; Luke 9: 18-21

Read Mark 8: 22-26. Notice in the cure recorded here the customary means used in healing the man.

Jesus now takes His disciples on a journey to the secluded district of Cæsarea Philippi. Here another crisis is reached. The popularity of Jesus had steadily declined. John the Baptist had expressed his doubt about the Messiahship of Jesus. The priests had determined to kill Him and the treachery of Judas was perhaps beginning to develop. Now that He was an unpopular fugitive, Jesus wished to know what the disciples thought of Him before proceeding with them further. Read Mark 8: 27-30.

"Thou art the Christ." Exactly what this meant to Peter, it is impossible to determine. The intense personality, the fearless manhood, the deep, tender, loving spirit of Jesus had drawn and held the disciples to Him. Much of what He said was incomprehensible. Some of His acts or sometimes His failure to act were inexplicable. But He Himself held them and they yet believed He would restore the Kingdom to Israel. The spiritual significance of His message was only partially understood by them and the rebuke of Peter in 8: 32 and the request of James and John in Mark 10: 35 show that they still looked for the material kingdom. Notwithstanding the seemingly inconsistent conduct of Jesus as a Messianic aspirant, they clung to Him as the fulfillment of the highest hopes of Israel and confidently believed Him to be the Messiah.

The account of Matthew of the confession of Peter con-

¹ The Gospel History and Its Transmission. F. C. Burkitt. T. and T. Clark. The Charles Scribner's Sons. New York,

tains an addition, Matthew 16:18-19, which, it seems to the writer, is clearly a reflection of the views and beliefs of the early church. (See references 6 and 21.)

V. 30. "He charged them that they should tell no man of him." Why?

Study VIII. Fifth Day

Jesus Tells the Disciples of the Inevitable End Awaiting Him. The Rebuke of Peter. Mark 8:31-9:1; Matt. 16:21-28; Luke 9:22-27

Assured of the loyalty of the disciples, Jesus began to tell them of the inevitable end of His earthly life. He had realized that "to continue his work in Galilee was impossible, for it meant the increased opposition of the Pharisees and probably imprisonment and death at the hands of Herod. To seek permanent refuge in a foreign land meant inevitable failure and disgrace, for it was equivalent to abandoning his ideals and followers. . . . To perform his mission he must face Israel's leaders, declare himself at Jerusalem, and, if need be, die for the truth which he proclaimed. . . . His lament over Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, and, later, over Jerusalem, leave no doubt that he had ardently hoped that the outcome would be different. His prayer in Gethsemane shows beyond doubt that he at times prayed that he might not be obliged to drink the bitter cup of suffering and seeming failure; but as a careful student of the II Isaiah and of the larger book of life, he recognized that the way in which the servant of Jehovah was to perform his task was the way of seeming shame and of patient suffering and of complete self-sacrifice."¹ Read Mark 8:31-9:1.

Yet how inconsistent was this with the popular Messianic idea. The Messiah was not to be put to death, he was to rule. Peter naïvely takes Jesus aside and remonstrates with Him that it is "poor politics" to talk about His death. Such statements will drive people from Him. No man wants to

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

risk his life in an unsuccessful venture. In the suggestion of Peter, Jesus sees the awfulness of the third temptation come before Him again—seek success by scheming and not by sacrifice. Is it any wonder He rebuked Peter so unsparingly?

The prediction about rising again in three days is probably an addition by the evangelist who wrote the gospel in the light of subsequent events. "Jesus never claimed to be a seer."¹ See Mark 13:32.

Study VIII. Sixth Day

Jesus Is Concerned About All of the Disciples. Mark 8:34-9:1

Read Mark 8:34-9:1. How strange and paradoxical these words of Jesus seemed. Instead of the triumphal procession of a great army with their prancing horses and flashing armor, "Jesus pictures Himself leading a procession of men out to execution, each with a cross on his shoulder."² And yet the discourse closed with a note of triumph in 9:1. It was difficult for the disciples to reconcile this triumphant note with the previous allusion of Jesus to His death. Read again vv. 35-37. These verses have been discussed somewhat in a previous study but it is well to recall them. It is only by losing our temporal life in service that we can find our inward life enriched to the uttermost. A tragedy in life is for a man to starve his soul for the profit of this world. In the view of Jesus, the goal for which we should sacrifice everything, is friendship with God. The man who for fame or money or influence turns a deaf ear to the voice of God within him, even though he attain his end, has paid too great a price for it. "If a man were gaining a legal title to all the real estate in the world and losing his capacity for friendship, . . . he would be on the road to eternal pauperism."² The disciples had yet to learn that we tri-

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umph by sacrifice of self. In laying down our life for a principle, we thereby establish it. It was the fear that the disciples would not realize this, which concerned Jesus at this time.

The original utterance of Jesus in v. 38 is found in Matthew 10:33. In Mark 8:38 the evangelist has transformed it in accordance with the apocalyptic beliefs of the early church.¹

Study VIII. Seventh Day

Review

Thus far we have tried to avoid the discussion of anything in these studies which cannot be accepted by an open-minded man.

Jesus appears in Galilee preaching. He believes in God as our Father, and seeks to relate men in friendship with God. The grandeur of His teachings, which is also pictured in His life, pass comprehension. His teachings challenge us to heroic service. Although, in the opinion of His followers, He does not always take advantage of His opportunities, and seems to predict an end impossible for a Messiah, they stand by Him.

1. Do you look at the sayings of Jesus as a series of disconnected maxims which are to be applied to the details of conduct, or are you trying to grasp the great principles that Jesus taught?

2. Would you vote to refuse membership in the church to a man who could not intellectually accept parts of the Apostles' Creed, yet who was a sincere follower of Jesus Christ, and living a Christlike life?

3. Are you neglecting father, mother, or sister on the ground that you have sufficiently done your duty by them?

4. Are you able to appreciate the worth or good qualities of an enemy? It is easier to criticize a church not your own than to sincerely appreciate its value.

5. "What think ye of Christ?" No man is ever the same

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. The Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

after studying the life of Jesus. We are either better or worse. He makes a decision imperative. We either accept or reject Him. The life of Jesus meets us with a challenge which must be obeyed or refused. There is no neutral ground.

6. Do you ever try to use "tact" or "diplomacy" in dealing with a definite moral question?

7. Do you dare to fight a losing battle for right regardless of personal consequence?

8. You have heard the expression "You merely throw your vote away when you cast it for so-and-so." No honest vote is ever thrown away. No life is ever wasted which is sacrificed in service. No righteous cause is ever lost when men will die for it.

9. What is your goal in life? "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

STUDY IX. FIRST DAY

The Transfiguration. Mark 9: 2-8; Matt. 17: 1-13; Luke 9: 28-36

Six days intervene between the transfiguration and the "perplexity into which Jesus had plunged His disciples,"¹ discussed in the last study. It was an exceedingly critical week. Jesus was evidently preparing Himself to face the cross, and at the same time, "he was endeavoring to adjust his followers to the new situation and to give them a true appreciation of the real task of the Messiah and of the way in which that task must be accomplished."² He was in danger now of having them leave Him altogether and abandon Him as so many others had done. "It may well be, as some one has suggested, that during this critical week Jesus told them the story of His own temptation that has come down to us in Matt. 4. He may also have told them of the dove and the heavenly voice at the baptism (Mark 1: 9-11).

"At the close of the week, Jesus took the three leaders of the inner circle up into a mountain for a night . . . of prayer."¹ Read Mark 9: 2-8.

The story is told in the form of a parable as are the temptation and baptism. The audible voice and the actual appearance of Moses and Elijah, the writer does not believe, are to be interpreted literally. Jesus evidently endeavored to explain to these three disciples that His ideas of the Kingdom were exactly in accord with the teachings of Moses and the expectations of the prophets (v. 4). The intensity of His conviction, the grandeur of His life, the nobility of His character seemed to glow with such radiance as He talked with them, that they were lifted out of themselves (v. 5). In spite

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of His strange views, Peter, James, and John came down from the mountain convinced that Jesus was the Messiah (v. 7) and resolved to stand by Him to the end.

"Although these leaders would not tell the other nine what they had experienced on the mountain (Mark 9:9), their own unwavering confidence henceforth in Jesus' Messiahship turned the scale, and from this time on the whole company anticipated for themselves the political honors of the coming Kingdom with entire confidence (Mark 9:33; 10:35-37)." ¹

Study IX. Second Day

Cure of the Epileptic Boy. A Short Visit to Galilee. The Dispute as to Who Was Greatest. Mark 9:9-37; Matt. 17:14-18:6; Luke 9:37-48

Read Mark 9:9-13. Jesus again enjoins secrecy upon the disciples. If He had permitted the disciples to mention His Messiahship, they would probably have recruited followers and enlisted support in order to be prepared when the Messianic demonstration occurred. Their activity would have brought matters to a crisis quickly. Jesus wished to let events take their own course and at the same time to prevent the disciples from securing followers on a false basis. If He had permitted them to publish the fact of His Messiahship, the reaction occasioned by His death would have been even more disheartening to them than it was, and some of them would never have been reclaimed.

Vv. 9-11 were written, the writer believes, in the light of subsequent events.

Read Mark 9:14-29. Notice vv. 24 and 29.

Read Mark 9:30-32. Jesus pays a short visit to Galilee, and as He comes within the province again, He naturally thinks of the antagonism of the Pharisees and Herod. Once more, He warns His disciples of His approaching death.

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This time, remembering the manner in which Jesus had rebuked Peter, the twelve were afraid to ask Him for any further explanation or to remonstrate with Him in any way.

Read Mark 9:33-37. Notwithstanding the unselfish life Jesus had lived, notwithstanding the ideas of service He had tried to teach the disciples, we find them at this late period arguing as to who was the greatest, and who would be prime minister when the Kingdom was established. "Let those of you," said Jesus, "who desire to be great, realize that greatness comes by unselfish service. He who desires greatness by that very desire shows himself incapable of true greatness. But he who forgetting himself and caring not for fame, devotes himself to others with no expectation of reward, already possesses greatness. And those of you who are seeking favor of Peter, James, or John in order that you may profit by their influence, should rather begin to seek favor of those who, like little children, cannot reward you. In serving them, you will be serving me."

Read Luke 14:12-14, as a further illustration of this last thought.

"The extreme simplicity of life in the Kingdom of Heaven, as Jesus conceived it, is evident here. The Kingdom is an EMPIRE OF UNSELFISH GOOD-WILL expressed in the ordinary relationships of life. We need repeatedly to ask ourselves, Do I enjoy doing for those who can make no return in kind? For instance, do I feel an increasing degree of Jesus' interest in little children?"¹

Study IX. Third Day

The Selfish Misconception of the Kingdom Held by the Twelve and Their Own Danger of Failing to Enter the Kingdom. Mark 9:38-50; Matt. 18:7-14; Luke 9:49-50

Read Mark 9:38-40. The disciples found a man casting out devils by using the name of Jesus and immediately

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stopped him. "What right has this man to do this?" they ask among themselves. "He is not one of us. But probably when the Kingdom is established he will want to claim his share of honor."

The disciples had not yet realized the universality of the message of Jesus and their selfishness prevented them from appreciating the work and purpose of this man. How many of us are such followers of Him? If another movement takes a few members from our Sunday school, church, or Bible class, we frequently resent it. We rarely ask ourselves, Can this other organization develop Christlike character in the members who have left us better than we could have done? If so, let us be thankful that the new movement started, or that the new church moved into our neighborhood. Let us send more members to them. The statistics in the year book or the conference minutes will indicate failure in our work but the Kingdom will be further advanced.

We are frequently so zealous of our own organization that we unconsciously place its development first, giving to the Kingdom of our Lord a secondary position.

Jesus told the disciples that they had made a mistake. They should have appreciated that the purpose of the man was sincere. Regardless of the actual results, he was trying as sincerely to build up the Kingdom as the disciples themselves. "Moreover," continued Jesus, "at a time of opposition like this, no one would dare to commend my work or use my name who was not a sincere follower."

Read Mark 9:41-42. "The most trivial service," continued Jesus, "rendered in an unselfish spirit marks a man just so far a follower of mine. As for any one who by ridicule, jest, sarcasm, or seeming superiority disheartens or alienates a follower of mine, it were better for him if a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea."

Read Mark 9:43-50 in which Jesus again emphasizes the importance of sacrificing anything in our lives which would prevent us entering the Kingdom. The meaning of "hell" or "Gehenna" was discussed in a previous study and need not be explained here.

Jesus closes this warning to the disciples with the words,

"Be at peace one with another." Let each one be so filled with the spirit of self-sacrifice that there will be no further disputes about who is greatest.

Study IX. Fourth Day

The Reply of Jesus to the Question of Peter Concerning Forgiveness, and the Teaching Regarding Marriage. Mark 10:1-12; Matt. 18:21-19:12

Peter had probably been the leader in the discussion in Mark 9:33-34. His impetuous, authoritative manner must have antagonized some of the disciples who did not hesitate to make unkind remarks about him. Peter evidently felt as if he had been unjustly attacked and came to Jesus with the question in Matthew 18:21. Read Matthew 18:21-35.

The point of the illustration is that the king released his servant from a debt of ten million but the servant in turn cast into prison a man who owed him less than twenty dollars. The little wrongs done us which we forgive are so trifling compared with our sin which God forgives, after our rebellion against Him, that if we fail to forgive we are as ungrateful and detestable as the servant of the king. Imagine the astonishment of Peter when he grasped the meaning of the parable. The abuse he had suffered amounted to less than twenty dollars but God had forgiven him over ten million dollars. No matter how good we may be, we have infinitely more for which we need to ask forgiveness than we shall ever be called on to forgive. We are to show the same forgiving spirit to others as our Father manifests toward us.

Read Mark 10:1-12. These verses were studied in connection with the Sermon on the Mount. Let us think again of the sanctity of the home and ask ourselves if we are looking forward toward marriage as a spiritual and mental mating of two persons in loving comradeship, in order that the little ones may be nurtured in love and led into friendship with the Father.

Study IX. Fifth Day

**Jesus Blesses Little Children. Mark 10:13-16;
Matt. 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17**

Read Mark 10:13-16. The disciples had failed to realize that Jesus was concerned for every human being. The infinite value of every individual life had not yet become a basic principle with them. They did not rebuke the rich young ruler who came to Jesus but attempted to push aside the children, for Jesus was too busy, they thought, to be troubled with children. One can almost see the flash of indignation in the eyes of Jesus as He rebukes them. He was never so busy with the plans or organization of the Kingdom that He did not have time to attend to the needs of the least member of the Kingdom. Many men become so absorbed in the organization of Christian forces that they neglect in their own home or among their own friends the people for whom the organization is intended.

Moreover Jesus saw in the childlike mind the very quality necessary for entrance into the Kingdom. It is emphasized in the first Beatitude—the quality of open-mindedness. Receptive as they are to the truth, easily detecting and detesting sham, unhampered by material considerations, it is to the children or those of childlike (not childish) spirit that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs.

Men are frequently warped and biased by selfish considerations. Many, for instance, would enter the church—but then they would have to abandon certain questionable business methods; many would stand against wasteful public expenditures—but they receive their largest fees from dishonest government contractors; many would fight for social reforms—but they are afraid of losing their social position. A child is free from such influences and faces the truth with an open mind. Jesus “took them in his arms and blessed them.”

“Everything that Jesus touched He permanently dignified. The sick, who had before been neglected and abandoned, since He touched them are gathered into hospitals. The cross, which had before been the symbol of guilt, horror, and

shame, like the gallows, since He touched it has been the symbol of loving sacrifice to be gilded and lifted high on church spires or worn in miniature upon the person. Little children, who had before been slightly thought of, since He touched them have become the objects of tender regard. The care of infants, the early education of little children, engage the attention of the most skillful physicians and the greatest educators. In the New Order it is persons that receive supreme consideration—little persons, aged persons, sick persons, outcast persons, any kind of *persons*. Are you coming to feel a profound interest in all kind of persons?"¹

Study IX. Sixth Day

The Rich Young Man and the Warning of Jesus About the Peril of Riches. Mark 10: 17-31; Matt. 19: 16-30; Luke 18: 18-30

Read Mark 10: 17-22. The disciples were no doubt delighted when they saw this wealthy young man seeking an interview with Jesus, and they were greatly astonished when Jesus unnecessarily, as it seemed to them, sent him away by making such a severe demand of him.

Jesus told the young man, first of all, that God alone was absolutely good. There is a difference between sinlessness and absolute goodness. We find no trace of Jesus ever having confessed sin. If He had been guilty of sin without confession, it would have shown itself in His conduct, and in such a case the disciples would have unconsciously recorded it. But we find Jesus moving forward to the cross, teaching, and living a life perfectly consistent with a disavowal of sin. To be absolutely good, however, means that a man must have absolute knowledge. He must know what is the final standard of right and wrong even to the end of time. Jesus did not profess to have absolute knowledge. God alone, said Jesus, possesses such absolute knowledge and He alone is absolutely good.

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted, 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

It matters little, then, if Jesus were mistaken in His ideas of demoniac possession or in the apocalyptic dreams recorded in Mark 13. He enriched the world not so much by His knowledge as by His life. Jesus absolutely obeyed, as far as we know, every divine prompting within Him. He may have been mistaken regarding material facts and He may have even misinterpreted what He thought were divine promptings, but His purposes, and His obedience to the will of God, as He saw it, were, so far as we can see, absolutely perfect. It was not the enumeration of a few psychological or material facts which made Him unique, but it was His inner life, His motives, His spirit, by which He enriched the world and made Himself even to this day an object of adoration and worship.

Jesus finds that this young man with all his wealth had lived a clean, honorable life. Young, physically strong, neatly clothed, upright in conduct, thoughtful of his parents, is it any wonder that Jesus loved him? But the young man fell short of the best. He needed to take his life and his possessions and use them in some great cause. Alas, he thought more of his wealth than of anything else. He was willing to follow Jesus to a certain extent. He was willing to deny himself to a certain point. But to give up his wealth was asking too much.

Jesus did not regard riches as evil in themselves. But when anything except the will of God becomes the dominant purpose of the life of a man, it is to be cut away. It is not always money. It may be political position, social standing, ties of friendship which we are unwilling to break, even for the opportunity of greater service to God. In very many cases it is the lure or possession of money that enslaves men. "Jesus' teachings, therefore, are very clear: the acquisition and possession of wealth as an end in itself means slavery and moral blindness for the individual, injustice to society, and disloyalty to God. Regarded as a trust and used faithfully for the service of God and man, riches have their important place in the kingdom of God." ¹ Read Mark 10: 23-31.

The truth of the proverb in v. 25 was very evident in the

¹ *The Life and Teachings of Jesus.* C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

case of this young man who, though possessing great possibilities for service to the Kingdom of God, could not sacrifice his wealth.

Thus it is to-day. The child-labor laws are fought by those who profit from the labor of children; honest civic administration is fought by those who reap the spoils of corrupt politics; and the hardships of mission work are usually avoided by the sons of the wealthy. Wealth, especially inherited wealth, is a curse to many and leads to indulgence in sin and disintegration of spiritual forces. Truly in many cases it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.

For those who make the material sacrifice, the inward enrichment of their lives will multiply a hundredfold.

“This is the gospel of labor — ring it, ye bells of the kirk — The Lord of Love came down from above, to live with the men who work.

This is the rose that He planted, here in the thorn-cursed soil —

Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but the blessing of earth is toil.”

HENRY VAN DYKE.

Study IX. Seventh Day

Review

1. Ought we not to show as much genuine courtesy to the newsboy as to the dean?

2. Would you go far out of your way to serve a dying charity patient?

3. Would you be willing to discontinue your Sunday school and send the pupils to the school of another denomination if you sincerely thought that they could better train your children in Christian character than your school could?

4. Do you resent the intrusion of others into your field of service? If you have failed as a pastor or a secretary, would you genuinely rejoice to see your successor prosper?

5. Is your life suffused with the spirit of Christ? Does

your conversation with bootblack, waiter, car conductor, elevator boy, and clerk, radiate with the genuine love of Christ for men?

6. Have you ever discouraged sincere people in work for the Kingdom by destructive criticism, or by jesting about religion? Many students fall into the habit of placing themselves upon a pedestal of superior knowledge (?), pointing out the faults and defects of the Sunday school, the church, the revival, and the whole program of religion, without making an effort to apply a constructive remedy.

7. Do you harbor ill will when unjustly attacked?

8. Many students become interested in people in the abstract and talk interestingly on modern methods of religious work, but they have lost the individual touch. Jesus was interested in people as individuals and always set aside the organization when it was necessary for the good of the individual. Some men preach excellent sermons on love and forbearance but become exceedingly irritated and speak unkindly to their wives if dinner is half an hour late.

9. Do you believe a child of wealth deserves more credit for nobility of life and faithfulness to duty than a child of poverty?

10. Are you falling short of the best? Many students with great possibilities content themselves with an easy task which calls for only mediocre talent, instead of throwing their lives into some great cause which demands their all.

11. With all your advantages are you doing as much proportionately for Christ as the man with poorer equipment?

12. What is first in your life? What is the chief end of man?

13. Have you ever considered your "financial budget" from the religious standpoint? Do you think it as sinful to waste money as it is to hoard it? Has a man any more right to waste money than to debase his character? Does not the honest accumulation of wealth strengthen character?

14. Students often fail to give to the church, missions, or charity but deny themselves no personal indulgence. They never miss a football game or a cotillion but cannot spare even as small an amount as fifty cents for foreign missions.

15. Do you realize that the way you spend your money in-

dicates your character as much as the way you spend your time?

16. Regardless of his position every man has temptations commensurate with his nature. We must let neither poverty nor riches, education nor ignorance, hinder us from subordinating our all to the will of God.

17. How would Jesus deal with the idle rich?

18. Are the moral questions concerned with wealth dependent upon the amount of wealth?

19. If in a particular instance, honesty would lead to bankruptcy, what would be the instructions of Jesus?

20. Let us realize that growth in character comes not by having things but by doing things. "It is action, as a matter of fact, that *measures the final worth of any life*. We are in the world, not to look on, but to do. He lacks manhood who lives but to be amused by the passing show. Work bestows meaning upon life, and brings unity to its scattered impulses. Work gives a man dignity and poise; it shows forth the divinity that is within him. Not just to find out God's wisdom are we here, but to work for Him and with Him in the building of His kingdom."¹

¹ The Pupil and the Teacher. L. A. Weigle. Copyrighted 1911. Used by permission of the George H. Doran Company. New York.

STUDY X. FIRST DAY

The Peril of an Empty Life. Matt. 12:43-46

There are a number of sections in Luke and Matthew not contained in Mark which should be studied before taking up the last journey to Jerusalem. The first of these is the passage in Matthew 12:43-45. The trouble with the house spoken of in this parable was that it was empty. In the language of to-day, the paint was fresh, the roof was good, the plumbing was modern, the floors were of hardwood, but no one lived in it. Jesus is teaching us in this parable that we must not only have a good life but a life good for something.¹ It is perilous to stay on the defensive in Christian work. We cannot expect to attain the Kingdom by merely refraining from evil. Either we do good or our good intentions become atrophied. Something must fill our lives: if it is not good, it will be evil. The danger of so many college men is not that they do so much evil, but that they do no good. Some day they will be surprised to find that their religious life is dead. This principle is well illustrated by a zealous Christian student who, upon graduation, went to the Philippines as a government teacher. He did not spend himself in religious service for others in the Philippines as he had done in America. When he came home, he found that his religious zeal had died out and that he felt spiritually dead. "It was not that I did anything particularly wrong in the Philippines," he said in explanation, "but I just did nothing." His life was empty.

How many students crowd their life with athletics, class politics, college publications, and social life, until prayer,

¹ Jesus Christ and the Christian Character. F. G. Peabody. The Macmillan Company. New York.

Bible study, and service are crowded out and their religious life becomes atrophied.

The reverse of this parable is equally true. By filling our lives with good and spending ourselves in Christian service, evil will be crowded out. The easiest way to live right, is not to spend so much time in the repression of the evil in us, but to spend all our time in the expression of the good. We are never so free from temptation as when helping another who is tempted. As long as our lives are dominated by some lofty purpose, we are not likely to fall.

Let us make a budget of our time and thought and begin to exclude the damaging and non-essential by filling up with the Christlike.

Study X. Second Day

The Kingdom, the Highest Good. Luke 9: 57-62

Read Luke 9: 57-62. In these three illustrations, Jesus teaches that the Kingdom is of highest importance.

To the first man who wished to follow Him, He pointed out that it might mean a complete sacrifice of material comforts, but that it was worth the price.

To the second man, who wished first to bury his father, Jesus said that his father was dead and nothing more could be done for him. The Kingdom was a matter of the greatest and most immediate importance to the living.

To the third man, who wished to bid farewell to his relatives, Jesus advised the dispensing with such formalities. The Kingdom needed him.

These sayings may seem harsh to some people. Jesus did not compromise. He stated principles outright, so that there could be no doubt of His meaning, and no place for exceptions. Jesus did not teach disrespect to the dead; He was emphasizing the supreme importance of the Kingdom. The father was dead. The son could not help the father by attending to the funeral rites, which could be looked after by some one else. He could better show his respect for

his father by attending to a matter of supreme importance to the living, than by neglecting the living in order to perform the ceremonies due to the dead.

In a charge, a soldier's comrades may fall by his side yet he must go forward. The objectives must be gained, the battle must be won, the dead will be buried later.

Again, Jesus had no objection to one's saying good-by to his kinsfolk, but taught that such customs are not to stand in the way of the Kingdom.

There is a lesson here for college men. Such expressions as these are frequently heard on the campus: "I'm sorry, but I can't attend Bible study to-day; we have a class meeting." "I'm sorry, but you had better not count on me for your prayer group; the editors of the college paper frequently have their meeting at that hour." "I can't take the chairmanship of the Bible study committee next year; I'm trying for manager of the track team and I can't do both." "I have just all the work I can do this year; I'm interested in your mission work, but don't count on me."

There are, however, a group of men who have caught the meaning of Luke 9:62. "Sorry," they say, "I'll have to drop the glee club, if you meet at that time; we have a Bible class then." "Sorry, but I have not time for football and the Christian Association too, so I'll have to drop football."

Is your religious work set aside for secular college affairs or does it come first? What is of supreme importance in your daily life?

Study X. Third Day

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

The parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the best known and most frequently quoted of the parables of Jesus. Therein, Jesus again declares that love is the sum of the law. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Love God, and

love your neighbor. These two commandments cannot be separated. A man cannot love God without loving his neighbor and a man cannot love his neighbor without, either consciously or unconsciously, loving God. In reply to the question "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus draws, in a striking way, a picture of love and its work. Read Luke 10:25-37.

The parable may perhaps be paraphrased thus. A man was journeying on horseback to a distant city. On the way, he was waylaid, robbed, and left to die by the roadside. A minister on his way, perhaps, to deliver the principal address at a great convention, on the subject, "The Creed, the Foundation of Our Faith," came along that way. He saw the wounded man, and his first impulse was to help him. But fearing the delay would make him late for his engagement, and put him in danger of being robbed himself, the minister hurried on, leaving the dying man unattended. A secretary of the Christian Association passed by. He was on his way to address a great mass meeting on the subject, "The Church and Its Call to Men." He saw the wounded man and stopped for a moment to look at him. He could do little for the man anyway, and as the mass meeting was important, he too hurried on, leaving the wounded man unattended by the roadside.

Then a negro came along that way. The negro had just finished work in a neighboring town and had a week's wages in his pocket. If the robbers caught him, all his money would be taken and there would be two dying men instead of one. The negro did not think of this. He dressed the wounds of the man; put him on his mule; took him to the next town; lodged him at a boarding house; sent for a doctor; and paid the bills.

This paraphrase is not intended as a slur on ministers and Association secretaries, but is told to illustrate the idea of Jesus of the supreme requirement of religion. The minister in hurrying on to address the convention on the Creed, neglected to render the service for which the creed was formulated.

The secretary, in his neglect of the man, failed in the very purpose for which the church, to which he was calling men, was organized.

Ritual, orthodoxy, churchmanship are not ends in them-

selves. They are merely the body in which the spirit of loving service is nurtured.

Do we wish to inherit eternal life? Then let us love God and love our neighbor, and let us express our love as this negro expressed his love for the wounded man.

We have also in this parable a clear definition of love. It is not sentiment or emotion. It is joyful service. The minister and the secretary may have preached excellent sermons on love. They may have shed tears when a man "hit the trail." But they were blind to a most obvious case of human need. Love, then, is the strength of one man applied to the need of another; it is thoughtfulness; it is genuine interest in human beings as such; it is courtesy; it is tenderness; it is sacrifice; it is, in a word, the expression in life of the Christlike spirit.¹ "To Jesus," some one has said, "the only orthodoxy is love, the only heresy is selfishness." The great world war demonstrated that individual or organized selfishness cannot exist in a world with the ideals of Jesus and that war will never cease until individuals and nations cease to be selfish and are dominated by love, as the Good Samaritan was.

"Who was neighbor to him that fell among the thieves?" The Jew detested the Samaritan so much that he would not even mention the name Samaritan. "He that showed mercy on him," was the reply. "And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

Study X. Fourth Day

Martha and Mary. Luke 10:38-42

Luke next records a visit of Jesus to the home of Martha and Mary. Read Luke 10:38-42.

When Jesus entered this home, Mary laid aside all household cares in order to spend her time with the Master. She wished to enjoy His companionship. The household work could be done at another time when Jesus was not there.

¹ Jesus Christ and the Christian Character. F. G. Peabody. The Macmillan Company. New York.

What were household duties compared with an hour spent in the presence of the Master?

Martha, on the other hand, busied herself with the household cares. The Teacher was here and the best linen must be spread. The guest room must be dusted and swept. The dinner must be well cooked and of a quality befitting an occasion like this. And Martha became irritated because Mary left all this work for her to do. Jesus was not so much concerned about food and spotless linen. It was an appreciation of Himself and a desire for His message that He wanted. It was her spirit of welcome and her sense of the real values in life that Jesus commended in Mary.

A certain evangelist, who often spent months away from home, was walking down the street with his little girl on the morning of his return from one of his long trips. An old friend met him and requested him to look at the new institutional church which was being erected close at hand. The evangelist looked at his little girl and taking a few coins from his pocket, said, "Here, girlie, run, buy yourself some candy. Daddy is going with Mr. — for awhile." The little girl held the coins in her open hand and, looking up at her father, said, with quivering lips, "Daddy, you have been away nine months. I don't want your money. I want you."

Jesus wants you — not so much your money, or your time, or your influence, as your heart. Have you given yourself to Him?

Jesus did not want food as much as He wanted that devotion of the heart which sought refreshment in His presence.

Study X. Fifth Day

The Prodigal Son. Luke 15:11-32

We come now to another well-known parable of Jesus, the parable of the Prodigal Son. Read Luke 15:11-32.

The first lesson that we learn from this parable is the love of the Father for us. No matter how low we fall, or how degraded we may become, He stands ready to receive us to Himself again. The pathetic thing about the wayward son was,

that only by draining the cup of sin to the bottom could he learn how bitter were the dregs. Hundreds of boys and college men are to-day being warned of the inevitable consequences of sin and of disobedience to the call of God, but they will never "come to themselves" until they have paid the penalty. Alas, then, a majority of them either are dead, or lack the power to "arise and go to their Father." Yet the heart of the Father yearns for the return of His wayward children and is ever seeking to draw them to Himself with cords of love.

There is another lesson that we may learn from this parable. It is from the attitude of the elder brother. It was the attitude of this son which disturbed Jesus. The elder brother was selfish. He was not as much concerned about the welfare of his brother as he was about the attention which he thought due to himself. If his heart had been full of love, when informed of the cause of the rejoicing in the house, he would have rushed in and wept on the neck of his brother as his father did, and would have contributed anything he owned to the occasion. But he was angry and would not go in. Think of the jealousy, ill temper, and selfishness displayed here.

Do you ever sulk because you do not receive your share of glory in the success of an enterprise? Do you feel bitter against the other half back because he gets so much applause and cheers for carrying the ball when his success is the result of your interference?

In this parable Jesus is again calling attention to love and unselfishness as the great essential of life.

Study X. Sixth Day

Jesus Faces Jerusalem. Mark 10:32-34; Matt. 20:17-19; Luke 18:31-34.

We now begin the study of the final period in the life of Jesus. He felt that His disciples were prepared to withstand the shock of coming events, however dreadful these might be. At any rate, Peter, James, and John would keep

the others of the twelve faithful. Realizing the inevitable end awaiting Him, yet hoping to the last that the nation would accept His message, Jesus traveled toward Jerusalem at the time of the celebration of the Passover. At this time, pilgrims from the surrounding provinces would be assembled in Jerusalem, and then, if ever, He could appeal to the entire nation.

"There is no evidence in the gospel narratives," says Professor Kent, "that Jesus was conscious of following a pre-ordained programme. On the contrary, they testify that even to the last he cherished the hope that Jerusalem would not maintain its evil reputation of killing its prophets. Like a mother bird, he longed to gather ~~her~~ children together and protect them from the fate that he saw was inevitable if his nation continued to follow its false ambition. But Jesus knew well the forces with which he had to deal, and the evidence is cumulative that he went up to Jerusalem in the spirit of a martyr, fully aware of the dangers which confronted him."¹

On the way, Jesus once more warned His followers of the inevitable consequences to Him of facing the nation with His uncompromising message. The evangelist again wrote the warning of Jesus in the light of later events.¹

Study X. Seventh Day

Review

We have now reached the final period in the life of Jesus. Thus far, we have avoided the discussion of the miracles, and of doctrines which are usually considered stumbling-blocks in the way of men who are trying to think their way through religious problems. As the studies have advanced, the depth and profundity of the teachings of Jesus have become more evident, and the perfection of His character has gradually been revealed. We found that over and over again He placed the emphasis on what we to-day call Christlike love as the

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

essence of religion. We found that His sense of union with the unseen Father was the dynamic of His life.

During this week, some very impressive lessons have been studied.

1. Our lives must be filled with good or evil. We have twenty-four hours a day. Let us fill them with active good so that there will be no room for evil.

2. The religious work in a large university was ineffectual because the so-called Christian men placed track practice, publication meetings, glee club and class meetings first. Whenever there was a conflict between any of these and the weekly devotional meeting, the Bible class, or the mission study committee, the religious work was set aside. Gradually, however, a group of men caught a vision of the supreme importance of the Kingdom and when there was a conflict between the religious work and the glee club or track team, the glee club or track team were set aside and the religious work attended to. The result was that the Christian work became effectual and other organizations, without any detriment, held their meetings at other times.

3. Does religion for us consist in church membership, worship, monetary contributions, or abstinence from certain sins which are openly tabooed? Are we kind and considerate to others? Do the members of our family respect our religious belief on account of the thoughtfulness and affection it causes us to show them? Does our sympathy spontaneously go out to a person in need without our thinking of his race, social standing, or religious convictions? Are we genuinely interested in human beings as human beings?

4. Do you complain of your hard lot because you have so many family burdens to carry? Ought you not rather to be thankful that you are able to be so helpful?

5. It is sad that most prodigal sons never return. Many occupy early graves. Others are powerless in the grip of sin. Is it better to keep ten boys from becoming prodigals than to rescue more than ten after they have become prodigals? Are you an elder brother? Do you calculate how much your parents have given your brothers and sisters and then complain because your portion is somewhat less? Or are you so interested in the welfare and happiness of others

that you never think of whether you receive your proper share of glory? Can you refrain from bitterness when favors are bestowed on an enemy?

6. Would you be willing to face unpopularity, ridicule, or danger for the sake of aggressively doing right?

7. Jesus went to Jerusalem. He did not wait for the religious leaders to search Him out. The Christian life is not a passive, sanctimonious existence; it is a battle for the right. Are there evils in your college or community? Then fight them. It is as much your task as anybody's.

STUDY XI. FIRST DAY

The Political Ambition of James and John. Mark 10: 35-45; Matt. 20: 20-28

James and John came to Jesus at this time with a request for the principal places in the New Kingdom. Even at this late date in the life of Jesus, notwithstanding that He had shown no trace of political ambition, and had warned the disciples of His approaching death, the twelve still held to the belief in the early establishment of a temporal kingdom. Jesus did not attempt to disabuse their minds but asked them if they could pay the price for such priority as they requested. Read Mark 10: 35-45.

When the other disciples heard the request of James and John, they became indignant — not at the selfish ambition of James and John, for the ten themselves were not less selfish — but they were provoked because the fiery-tempered brothers had been the first to place their request for chief honors.

They were all equally at fault, and therefore Jesus called them to Him and told them that priority in His Kingdom would be based on unselfish service alone. Selfish ambition, desire for glory, or striving for material power were not only inconsistent with membership in the Kingdom, but would positively exclude one from it.

“The logical and probably original conclusion of Jesus’ reply to his disciples is found in the parallel passage in Luke 22: 27b: ‘And I am in your midst as one who serves.’ For this Mark has a teaching which reflects the influence of Paul and of the age in which the evangelist wrote: ‘For the son of man also came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.’ It assumes that Jesus had already come and completed his mission. It is the result of that mature meditation on the deeper and broader mean-

ing of his life-work which is presented still more fully in the Fourth Gospel." ¹

Study XI. Second Day

Jesus Passes Through Jericho on His Way to Jerusalem. Mark 10:46-52; Matt. 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-19:27

Read Luke 18:35-43. This miracle also will be discussed in a later study. Notice in passing v. 42. Read Luke 19:1-10. We find Jesus again violating the customs of His people by eating at the home of a tax collector. Jesus judged men by their aspirations and saw in each one great latent possibilities for good. Instead of turning away from Zaccheus on account of his station in life, Jesus entered his home, where contact and conversation with the Master soon led Zaccheus to amend his life and desire to restore fourfold any wrongful exaction he had extorted. Jesus then told before the assembled group the parable of the talents. Read Luke 19:11-27.

We are not held responsible for the use of talents which we do not possess; but only for those that we have. The man who cannot sing is not condemned for neglecting opportunities of thus using his voice in service to others. It is the man with a good voice who is held accountable for the use or neglect of his vocal talent.

Again, we are not judged by the actual amount we produce but by the proportional amount. The great man in the eyes of the world may be a man using only three-fourths of his talents. The great man in the eyes of our Father is he who returns one hundredfold regardless of the size of the output.

A sad feature of our life to-day is not that the man with one talent buries it in a napkin but that, in so many cases, the man with ten talents stands by and sneers at the church and

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

the Christian Association because the man with one talent does not carry more gracefully a load heavier than he can bear.

Study XI. Third Day

The Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. Mark 11: 1-10; Matt. 21: 1-11; Luke 19: 29-44

We now enter upon the last week of the life of Jesus. As He neared Jerusalem, He was accompanied by His disciples and a large group of pilgrims, a majority of whom were probably bound to Jesus, like Bartimæus, "by bonds of personal obligation and gratitude,"¹ and who made up a large informal procession. Read Mark 11: 1-11. There is nothing miraculous about the method of Jesus in securing the colt. Jesus was known in the country around Jerusalem and had friends near the city. On the way, the crowds, and especially the disciples, thinking perhaps the time of the Messianic demonstration was at hand, and stirred by their devotion to Jesus, burst forth in an enthusiastic demonstration which continued until He reached the city. This entrance into Jerusalem "illustrates Jesus' method during the last few days of his public activity. No longer does he enjoin silence upon his followers, but rather he courts publicity, for this was his chief safeguard in the perilous situation which he now faced. Hitherto he had borne the insults of the Jewish leaders almost in silence, but now he proceeded to arraign them at the center of their power and in terms that are merciless in their severity. In the public way in which he entered Jerusalem, Jesus proclaimed his presence to all and at the same time rallied his followers about him. It was the prelude to that challenge which he made to his nation to choose between him, the champion of the neglected masses, and their corrupt, self-seeking leaders. . . . His unassuming action, however, on reaching the temple, while absolutely consistent with his own character, forever disproved the conclusion still held

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

by many that he hoped at this time to establish himself on the throne of David as Israel's long-awaited Messianic king.

"Jesus' quiet withdrawal to Bethany, as evening came on, is one of the many indications, found in the records of this period, that he was fully aware of the danger that lurked everywhere in Jerusalem. This point is exceedingly important in understanding and estimating Jesus' character and purpose. For his followers and for his cause he deliberately faced what he knew to be the probability, almost the certainty, of ultimate death; but he did not court it. Jerusalem, with its narrow streets and its narrower religious ideas, must have oppressed the Master Builder of Nazareth, accustomed as he was to the hill-tops, the open fields, the large vistas of nature, as well as of God's truth. It was as natural as it was significant that he should retire, whenever it was possible, to the Mount of Olives, with its larger outlook, and to Bethany, which was near Jerusalem and yet out of sight of the city with its clamor and its bickerings. At Bethany, amidst the fig trees and the olive orchards, he was again in touch with nature. There he was no longer shut in by the narrow, rocky Judean hills, but could look far out over the wilderness of Judea toward the Jordan Valley and heights of Gilead and Moab beyond."¹

Study XI. Fourth Day

The Withering of the Fig Tree, and the Expulsion of the Bazaar Merchants from the Temple.

Mark 11: 12-25

Read Mark 11: 12-14, 20-25. We probably have, in the account of the fig tree, a parable of Jesus referring to the want of productiveness in the nation, and interpreted, by later tradition, as a miracle.¹

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

On the second day, Jesus enters the temple again and stands forth before the people as a champion of the rights of the poor. At the Passover season when the pilgrims came from many places to sacrifice, there was a great demand for doves, sheep, and cattle for the sacrifices, and a need for money brokers in order that the people from various places might exchange their money and trade in the currency of the temple. Seeing this opportunity for gain, the traders, with the consent and in some cases, perhaps, with the financial backing of the priests, opened a market in the temple courts, there to cheat the pilgrims and to enrich themselves by ill-gotten gain, under the cloak of religion. Instead of devout worshipers, the Gentiles found the court crowded with these rascals, and the prayer of the Jewish pilgrim was interrupted by the clinking of coins, the bleating of sheep, and the noise of barter.

Jesus burned with indignation when He saw this sacrilege and corruption. Seizing a piece of cattle rope and knotting it into a scourge, He drove them from the place. Read Mark 11:15-18.

Jesus has been pictured so frequently as the "meek and lowly" Jesus, that to many He seems almost effeminate. Here we see the fearlessness and courage of the Man who would endure without resentment, any wrong or outrage committed upon Him, but whose wrath blazed forth at injustice or wrong done to others. Durant Drake expresses this view of Jesus when he says: "The historic Jesus that emerges to our view as the result of the modern historical study of the Gospels is a very different figure from the effeminate Christ of mediæval art or the misty God-man of traditional dogma. It is rather a dominating and grip-pingly human personality—strong, fearless, stern, passionate in exhortation and rebuke; and yet with a rare purity and sweetness, a penetrating faith in sinful men, and a boundless love."¹

Another point to notice is that "here Jesus approaches more closely to the rôle of the ancient Hebrew prophets than at any other time in his ministry. Suddenly the teacher became

¹ Problems of Religion. Durant Drake. Copyrighted 1916. Used by permission of the Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston.

a social and national reformer. Most of his parables of this period deal not so much with private as with social and national questions. When Jesus for a brief moment assumed virtual control of the temple, he spoke thereby not to individuals or to a class, but to his race as a whole. His authority was the same as that of Jeremiah and the II Isaiah, whose words he significantly quotes (Jer. 7: 11, Is. 56: 7). He spoke in the name of justice and of Jehovah, whose temple he was attempting to reclaim from the hands of the robbers who had seized it. For the moment even the robbers themselves bowed before that authority. He rose as the champion of the helpless people, who were a prey to the greed and rapacity of their high priests."¹

Study XI. Fifth Day

The Priests Question the Authority of Jesus.

Mark 11: 27-12: 12; Matt. 21: 23-46;

Luke 20: 1-18

Angry at the expulsion of the traders, yet afraid of arousing popular feeling against themselves, the priests plan to alienate the crowd from Jesus and to convict Him, by forcing Him to declare Himself on certain important questions.

Suppressing their wrath, they first ask Him by what authority He expelled the bazaar merchants. Read Mark 11: 27-33. Instead of replying directly to their question, Jesus, by His question concerning the baptism of John, placed them in the same dilemma in which they had tried to place Him; either to acknowledge the divine commission of John and thereby acknowledge His commission as divine, or to take the consequences of antagonizing popular belief. They were unwilling to answer. Jesus, then, refused to answer their question. The implication, however, was clear to them that Jesus considered the authority of John, and likewise His own authority, to be from God.

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

Then, Jesus gave the cutting illustration in Mark 12:1-12 which somewhat reflects later tradition but the original point of which was perfectly clear, namely, that Jesus was working under the sanction and by the authority of God.

As the Jews of an earlier day had killed the prophets, so the present generation were seeking to destroy Him.

Study XI. Sixth Day

The Question of Tribute to Cæsar. Mark 12: 13-17; Matt. 22:15-22; Luke 20:19-26

The next party who tried to trip Jesus with questions was composed of Pharisees and Herodians. They came with the well-considered, diabolical flattery found in v. 14. "Shall we pay tribute to Cæsar?" they asked. If Jesus had answered, No, the Roman authorities would have disposed of Him. If He had answered, Yes, the people would have rejected Him, and would even have been tempted to stone Him as a traitorous Jew. Read Mark 12:13-17. Jesus answered their question by reminding them that He came to set men right with God, not to settle questions of taxation. It was because these Pharisees and Herodians were so far from God that they were trying to kill Jesus.

We see clearly in this incident the life purpose of Jesus. The outward forms and results of evil He rarely attacked. He did not believe in unjust taxation, yet He did not directly oppose it. He evidently did not believe in slavery, yet, to our knowledge, He did not raise a direct protest against it. The flagrant political and economic evils of His time were left untouched by Him. Except for a few instances during this closing week, He rarely appears as a national leader. Jesus came not as a reformer but as a revealer. He realized that if He could relate men in loving friendship to the Father unjust taxation would cease; that without the formation of this relationship it would not permanently cease, even though there were external laws to prevent it. Slavery, too, would cease only when men by communion with God

should realize that all men are children of one Heavenly Father, and hence brothers. Jesus sought to reform men inwardly, that they might reform conditions around them.

Study XI. Seventh Day

Review

1. Jesus based priority in His Kingdom on service. Do we really live as if we believe this, or are the principles of Jesus merely fine phrases on our lips with no resultant action in our lives?

2. Is your life yielding returns adequate to the amount of opportunities you have had? Have you consecrated your education for use in the Kingdom? Have you refused to take Sunday school work in your town because there are too many old residents in the work to whom you feel yourself, and to whom you probably are, intellectually superior?

3. Jesus went to Jerusalem, although He knew He was waging a losing fight. The highest type of courage is not that which carries victory with it. The man who fights a losing fight, with determination and faithfulness to the last, he possesses the highest courage.

4. When a man is in the wrong, he is half whipped before he is even attacked. Jesus did not drive out the money brokers by mere brute force. Such a group could have overpowered Him even though He evidently was physically very strong. His blazing personality and their consciousness of guilt made the task comparatively easy. Remember in your fight for right that the man in the wrong is a coward if he realizes his guilt.

5. Do you ever become so much occupied with the organization and the material side of Christian work that you lose sight of the fact that your organization will be permanent only as men are united in friendship with God? We do not need so much of programs, methods, or machinery to-day. We need power. We need consecration. We need men in whose hearts dwells the presence of the living

Christ, inspiring them to action. Is this the conscious aim of your work?

6. It may be advisable to mention again the phase of the character of Jesus discussed this week. It is so clearly expressed in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1918, by Joseph H. Odell that we shall quote at length from him. "Did this prophet know what he was doing? No one better! From the beginning he saw the end—shame and pain and death—yet he never shortened his lash or softened the sting of his tongue. He set his face steadfastly, marched forward with eyes unafraid, and finally flung himself upon the munitions of his enemies in a great *abandon* of passion. Members of the Sanhedrin rage and strike him; he treats Herod with incommunicable contempt; he tells Pilate that all his fancied prefectorial power is only a myth, a name; then—on to the ghastliest death that man could suffer, an end which a trifling compromise might easily have avoided. All alone he struck the pride of his people roughly in the face, cut the underpinning from beneath the popular philosophy, grappled with the superstitions which were choking the life out of humanity, fought relentlessly the smug complacencies and the organized hypocrisies of his race, championed the poor and outcast, interpreted the misunderstood, healed the crippled and broken, protected the weak and set a check upon the cynical power of the strong, flouted the law of the Jews and the wisdom of the Greeks and the junkerism of the Romans. Calumny and hatred could not make him pause, cajolery and flattery could not make him swerve; with never a thought of himself, never a care for consequences, never a momentary eclipse of self-confidence, he went grimly forward with his work. No one has ever outranked him in manhood, heroism, fortitude." "It was a daring thing when George Fox and William Penn refused to doff their hats in church; but that was baby play by the side of Christ's insurgency when he called the Pharisees whited sepulchres and whipped the money-changers out of the sacrosanct temple. To tell the venerated leaders of his nation that they were 'vipers,' and 'tenfold the children of hell,' and that it would be 'well if a millstone were hanged about their neck and that they were cast into the midst of the sea,' was not a

diplomatic approach to approved thought, and likely to make the speaker's life easy and safe." "Of course, it may be said that this is only one aspect of Jesus. Let that be granted. Jesus had a habit of occasionally appearing 'in another form.' The only point to be settled is this: that when he was in the presence of hypocrisy or cruelty or injustice or power set to an evil purpose, he was terrible in his sternness; confronted with anything which destroyed human rights, the benignant smile died from his face and the cloud of an awful anger gathered on his brow and the lightnings of holy resentment flashed from his eyes."¹

¹ Joseph H. Odell, *Atlantic Monthly*. February, 1918. Used by permission of the Atlantic Monthly Company. Boston.

STUDY XII. FIRST DAY

**The Question of the Sadducees. Mark 12:18-27;
Matt. 22:23-33; Luke 20:27-39**

The Sadducees next came to Jesus with one of their quibbling questions about the resurrection. Jesus did not try to prove to men the existence of God, or of life after death. The fundamental realities which are necessary to satisfy the deepest needs of our lives, He took for granted. God is, because the soul of every man cries out for such an affirmation. Friendship with the Father is an experience of the soul, not a logical deduction.

Jesus, however, goes back to the ancient law, which the Sadducees considered authoritative, and shows them that according to the law God was "not the God of the dead, but of the living." Read Mark 12:18-27. The future life, Jesus also implies, is not a physical but a spiritual existence, "for when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as angels in heaven."

Immortality cannot be absolutely proved. Most men believe in it because it is the only reasonable basis upon which they can live their lives. "What Professor Palmer of Harvard wrote with fine restraint, when he recorded his wife's decease, we instinctively feel about the whole prospect of personality's annihilation: 'Though no regrets are proper for the manner of her death, who can contemplate the fact of it and not call the world irrational, if out of deference to a few particles of disordered matter it excludes so fair a spirit?'"¹ Dean Bosworth expresses it: "He would be a cheap God whose friendship could be forever terminated by

¹ The Assurance of Immortality. H. E. Fosdick. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York.

a bullet crashing through the brain, or by a microbe in the system." ¹

Study XII. Second Day

The Great Commandment, the Question of Jesus Concerning the Descent of the Messiah, the Seven Woes. Mark 12:28-40; Matt. 23

Read Mark 12:28-34. The subject of the great commandment was discussed in connection with the parable of the Good Samaritan and need not be studied in detail here. Jesus then asks the Pharisees a question which they are unable to answer. Read Mark 12:35-37.

This passage is not considered by many scholars as an original utterance of Jesus, but, if it is authentic, Jesus is proving to the Pharisees their ignorance of the law and its meaning. Jesus probably did not wish to establish a Messianic truth by such a process of scriptural deduction. He was merely exposing the blind conceit of the selfish religious casuists.

During this week, Jesus probably pronounced the "woes" found in Matthew 23:1-39 and in Luke 11:37-54. Mark gives a condensed summary of them in 12:38-40. Read Mark 12:38-40. We will turn to the account of Matthew for the detailed study of these denunciations. Remember that the Gospel of Matthew was the liturgical gospel of the early church and at times it reflects the conditions of the early apostolic days rather than the actual words of Jesus.²

Read Matthew 23:1-12. What a picture of religious pretentiousness, joined to a corrupt life, Jesus gives us here. Caring not for human life but adding to the suffering of the poor, these men paraded as children of God.

Read Matthew 23:13. They not only refused to receive the truth themselves but did all they could to prevent others from receiving it.

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

² The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

Do you, by sneering at or joking about the church or Christian Association, prevent others from standing forth for Christ and His Kingdom?

Study XII. Third Day

The Seven Woes (continued). Matt. 23:15-22

Read Matthew 23:15-22. V. 15 is probably a reflection of conditions in the early church. In vv. 16-22, Jesus condemns the hypocrisy of a life legally correct but inwardly dishonest. One could not say of these religious leaders that their word was as good as their signed contract.

Read Matthew 23:23-24. How severely the Master condemns the man who degraded religion into a set of rules and customs to the neglect of the great fundamental principles of life.

There are men to-day who think it wrong to use profanity, yet they do not hesitate to sell fifteen ounces of merchandise as a pound or nineteen hundred and fifty pounds as a ton.

There are others who think it sinful to play cards, yet they do not pay their debts.

There are college students who think it wicked to dance, yet they do not hesitate to cheat in examinations.

There are men who think it wrong to play tennis on Sunday, yet they do not hesitate to extort an exorbitant rate of interest from the poor.

There are others who think it almost a sin not to attend church and prayer meeting regularly, yet they are selfish and disagreeable in their own homes, and fail to show affection or thoughtfulness for their wives.

Against this division of the moral life, Jesus continually protested. Religion must not be confined to a separate compartment, but must pervade the whole of life.

The writer is not endorsing profanity, dancing, or Sunday recreation. There are moral questions involved in their exercise, but God pity the man who places the supreme emphasis of his life on anything except the great fundamentals such as love, mercy, courage, truth, purity, honesty, fidelity,

willingness to die for the right. Jesus had a tender sympathy with the weak, but condemnation and wrath for the hard, mean, and selfish. Read again carefully vv. 23-24.

Study XII. Fourth Day

The Seven Woes (concluded). Matt. 23:25-39

Read Matthew 23:25-28. In these two woes, Jesus condemns the hypocrisy of those who outwardly profess religion but inwardly are corrupt. Religion, to the mind of Jesus, was very simple. It is friendship with the Father expressing itself in the commonplace, everyday relationships of life. Kindness in the home, honesty in business, sympathy with the weak, fearless opposition to evil, love toward all mankind, are the ways in which religion should manifest itself. The synagogue, the ritual, worship are valuable as aids to righteousness but are only so much sham when they become nothing but outward manifestations or mere professions.

Read Matthew 23:29-39. Last of all, Jesus condemns these religious leaders because they honor the prophets whom their fathers killed but plot death for the living prophets as their fathers did.

This address closes with the lament over Jerusalem, the last verse of which reflects the apocalyptic ideas of the early church.

Read again Matthew 23:37-38. How impressively Jesus expresses in these verses the intense yearning of the heart of the Master to lift His nation toward God. But they would not. One of the most difficult tasks in life is to create a desire within people for the best. How many of us would dare to pray, "O God, give me what I actually desire"? Are the pictures which our desires paint on the canvas of our imagination such that we should be willing to have them placed on public exhibition?

Many of us are greatly concerned about going to heaven, but the question which should really concern us is whether we would be satisfied there.

*Study XII. Fifth Day***The Two Mites of the Widow. The Apocalyptic Demonstration. Mark 12:41-13:37; Matt. 24 and 25; Luke 21:1-36**

After denouncing the religious leaders, Jesus sat down to rest and to watch the pilgrims file by, dropping their money into the box at the entrance to the temple. The wealthy and well-to-do dropped in sums which meant no sacrifice to them. A poor widow passed and dropped in two mites—a mere pittance, but it was a sacrifice for her to give even so small a sum. As Jesus had burned with indignation at the religious leaders who preyed upon the poor, He now praised unsparingly the spirit of sacrifice in the oppressed. Read Mark 12:41-44.

It was not the amount the widow gave but the spirit with which she gave it that impressed Jesus. She had given proportionately more than any, when she should have given less. A man once remarked that he did not desire much money, for fear it would clog his soul. Some men, instead of owning their wealth, are owned by it. They cannot give it away. Their souls are cramped, their lives are mean, the joy of giving and serving with their money as well as with their lives is unknown to them.

Jesus intended the words to be interpreted literally when He said: "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Read the 13th chapter of Mark in preparation for the study of to-morrow.

Read the 25th chapter of Matthew and dwell especially upon vv. 34-45.

*Study XII. Sixth Day***The Time of the Apocalypse. Mark 13; Matt. 24; Luke 21:5-36**

As the disciples left the temple, they expressed their wonder and admiration at the grandeur and vastness of the temple building. Jesus, realizing that the degeneracy of the

religion of His people would eventually sap the moral fiber of the nation and cause its overthrow, remarked that this great building would in time become a mass of ruins. Read Mark 13: 1-2. "The variants in certain Western texts add the words, 'But in three days another shall rise without hands.' These words are implied by the charges that are later brought against Jesus (Mark 14: 58 and 15: 29). . . . In these paradoxical words Jesus drew the contrast between the temple of stone, with its empty ceremonialism, and the spiritual temple, not to be seen with the eyes, but eternal. The temple of Herod, with its elaborate rites and traditions and creeds, stood in the way of that divine temple, in which alone God could be truly worshipped. In the vivid, concrete language which Jesus used, three days represented a brief period. The words reveal his absolute conviction that ere long the true and spiritual temple would take the place of that structure and type of worship which Israel's faith and needs had so long since outgrown."¹

Some of the disciples then asked the Master when this was to be. To their minds it was a material fact of which He was speaking. Jesus no doubt replied, as in v. 32, that no one knew except God. Read Mark 13: 3, 4, 32.

Between v. 4 and v. 32 is inserted a long apocalyptic passage reflecting the ideas of the early church. As it stands, it is probably not the words of Jesus.¹ The question it raises is, Did Jesus give the disciples a basis for their expectation of His second coming? If so, "he never gave it the prominent place in his teachings that it has in the synoptic gospels. Furthermore, it seems to be contrary to his conception of the kingdom or rule of God. With him the kingdom of God was present, not merely future. Its growth was gradual, not sudden and catastrophic. It was to be instituted, not through a miracle, but through the voluntary coöperation of men."¹

On the other hand, many scholars maintain that "Jesus, in his conception of nature, in his apparent belief in a personal devil, and in his acceptance of the Jewish tradition regarding the origin and authorship of the Jewish scriptures, showed himself in many respects a son of his age and race. It

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

would not have been strange if, to a certain extent, he had also shared its apocalyptic hopes.”¹ “The apocalyptic predictions first appear among the utterances that come from the closing days of his work at Jerusalem, when he found himself abandoned by the masses and confronting martyrdom at the hands of the leaders of his nation. With the Jewish prophets who penned the later apocalypses he shared the undying conviction, even in the face of persecution and calamity and death, that God was in his world and that the right would surely triumph in the end. This is the great principle that underlies all the apocalyptic promises attributed to him. It is also noteworthy that in the parables and passages, which come from the oldest teaching source (Q) and which imply the second coming of Jesus, the emphasis is not placed on the miraculous element involved in that coming, but on the personal responsibility of his disciples. ‘Watch and be faithful’ is the distinctive note in the parable of the wise and foolish maidens and of the faithful and wise servant.”¹

Personally, the writer does not believe that Jesus expressed to the apostles in detail the ideas as recorded in Mark 13, although He may have given them reason to believe in His early return in triumph. Read again in Study IX, Sixth Day, the discussion regarding the limitations of the knowledge of Jesus. Read thoughtfully the 25th chapter of Matthew.

Study XII. Seventh Day

Review

We have now come to the closing scenes in the life of Jesus. Once more we wish to state that we have thus far tried to avoid discussing in these studies doctrines and beliefs which are not reasonable and acceptable to an open-minded man. We have not discussed the miracles or the mysticism with which people usually surround the life of Jesus, but have tried to emphasize the principles which He taught and practiced. Some may say, “I do not believe that

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

there is a God." We have not said that there is. We have only said that Jesus believed there is a God and that Jesus called God, Father.

During this past week, we have seen that Jesus was unsparing in His condemnation of the hypocrite who outwardly professed religion but inwardly was selfish and corrupt; the man who was scrupulous in observing the debatable moral questions yet violated the fundamental principles of love and honesty; the man to whom religion consisted in attendance at church and in observance of ritual, and not primarily in living a good life; the man who evaded moral obligations through legal technicalities; the man who cast his vote for his own interests regardless of the interests of humanity involved in the contest.

In contrast with this type of man, Jesus praised those who sacrificed themselves and their possessions because of a genuine interest in others; those who tried to be right and to do right.

Fear of hypocrisy has kept some men from active religious work. There is a difference between an honest sinner and a hypocrite. The hypocrite is the man who professes to be honest and inwardly plans dishonesty. An honest sinner is the man who is inwardly sincere in following the right. He may be weak. He may fall frequently but he always falls forward. The hypocrite may be in the judgment of men a better citizen than the honest sinner, but God judges differently. The honest sinner may be a man in whom there is so much of the animal that he frequently yields to the lower impulses of his nature. The hypocrite, on the other hand, is the man who thoroughly able to control himself and his powers deliberately plans wrong or dishonesty, which he hides by parading before the community as religious. The honest sinner will try to atone for his mistakes, but the hypocrite will not pay an honest debt which he can evade. Hypocrisy is determined by a man's spirit and sincerity of purpose, not by his acts.

Now, as the shadow of the cross begins to darken His pathway, we find Jesus firm in the conviction that right will ultimately triumph and that the foundation of the Kingdom of God has been permanently laid.

STUDY XIII. FIRST DAY

The Anointing of Jesus at the House of Simon.

Mark 14: 1-11; Matt. 26: 1-16; Luke 22: 1-6

The priests determined to put Jesus to death as soon as they could do so without stirring up a riot. They did not wish to bring upon themselves the condemnation of the Roman authorities, as well as of their own people. Read Mark 14: 1-2.

An incident occurred at a dinner party given to Jesus and the disciples in Bethany which led one of His intimate followers to betray the Master to the priests. A woman, perhaps an outcast, or a woman of wealth, we do not know, had received some benefit at the hands of Jesus. A deep sense of gratitude which flooded her soul expressed itself in purchasing a costly cruse of ointment with which on this occasion she anointed Jesus. Read Mark 14: 3-11.

To some of the disciples, this was symbolic of the Messianic anointing soon to occur at which time Jesus would be made king. To Jesus, it was symbolic of the anointing for His burial. To those prejudiced against the Master, it was mere waste, but to Jesus, it was an expression of a heart overflowing with gratitude.

Jesus' reiteration of the statement about His death filled Judas with contempt. To him, Jesus probably appeared "as a sad sentimentalist unable to talk about anything but dying, . . . He lacked the sagacity and strength requisite for the administration of a great state. He let the crowds go unorganized. He would never be able to give the things for which Judas cared most. Caiaphas, Annas, and the rabbis were practical enough to know how to win!"¹

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

Therefore Judas quietly withdrew and made a bargain with the chief priests and "sought how he might conveniently deliver him unto them."

Study XIII. Second Day

Jesus Eats the Passover with His Disciples. Mark 14: 12-26; Matt. 26: 17-30; Luke 22: 7-38

With His deep insight into human nature, Jesus had realized for some time that Judas was drifting from Him. When, at the close of the dinner party at Bethany, Judas quietly went to the city, Jesus, no doubt, knew the reason for his departure. On this account, the Master maintained strict secrecy in regard to the place He had chosen in which to celebrate the Passover. There was nothing miraculous about securing the place any more than there was in securing the colt for the triumphal entry into the city a short time previous. Read Mark 14: 12-16.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of Jesus was His profound faith in humanity. He saw in every man great possibilities for good and believed that every one possessed capacity for moral growth. To the very last, He hoped that Judas of Kerioth would stand true. Instead of denouncing him before the other disciples, Jesus made a final appeal to Judas in such a way as not to expose him to the displeasure of his fellow disciples. There was no anger, bitterness, or complaint in the appeal of Jesus. It expressed the pity of Jesus for Judas. The Master was grieved, not because He was to suffer by the treachery of Judas, but because Judas had fallen so low. The heart of Jesus was full of love and compassion for all mankind and He desired each man to realize his best possibilities through friendship with God. Read Mark 14: 17-21.

During the course of the meal, Jesus distributed the bread and the wine, with the words that the bread was His body, and the wine, the covenant of His blood, which was shed for many. Read Mark 14: 22-25, remembering v. 25 to be the reflection of the belief of the early church.

To read into these words of Jesus theological conceptions of His person or mission is, the writer believes, to do an injustice to the Master.

The writer does not believe that Jesus went to the cross to appease the anger of God or to satisfy a sense of divine justice, but that He shed His blood to establish the new covenant of friendship between God and man into which the followers of Jesus had been introduced by Him.

Men had lost their way in seeking God. Jesus gave His life that He might direct men in the right path and lead them into friendship with the Father. He died to save us from sin by teaching and inspiring us to live lives of loving, self-sacrificing service. He died that right not might, truth not falsehood, love not selfishness might rule the world. Was He then the Son of God in the usual theological sense? We know not. For we cannot think of God in higher terms than those in which He is revealed by the life and death of Jesus.

Study XIII. Third Day

**Jesus Starts for Gethsemane. Mark 14:26-42;
Matt. 26:31-46; Luke 22:31-46**

After singing a hymn, Jesus and the disciples left the upper room and started toward a garden called Gethsemane. On the way, Jesus for the last time tried to prepare them for the ordeal through which He was about to pass. He was not thinking so much of the present as of the future. He wanted the disciples so prepared that after the crucifixion and resurrection they could look back and say, "The Master understood and tried to explain it to us but we could not comprehend. Now we see the reason for, and understand what He meant by His frequent warnings concerning His death."

Peter, however, was very emphatic in personally protesting against the statement of the Master that the disciples would forsake Him. Jesus replied in that memorable verse, Mark 14:30. Read Mark 14:27-31 remembering that v. 28 is probably a later reflection,

They had now reached the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus often retired for quiet. Eight of the disciples were left at the entrance to the garden. Only Peter, James, and John accompanied the Master at this last awful spiritual ordeal through which He passed. Read Mark 14:32-42. With a heart almost broken with passionate yearning to bestow upon His people infinite blessing, Jesus faced the last great crisis of His life alone. The uncomprehending disciples, overcome with weariness, fell asleep. The Master was about to be crushed by the greed, hatred, and treachery of His enemies. Alone, misunderstood, hated, rejected, and about to be betrayed, our Lord felt Himself weaken; despair surged over Him; He feared He could not endure the ordeal. In extreme agony of soul, He fell on His knees and prayed that, if it were possible, God might save Him from the cross; "nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt."

The agony in Gethsemane was not so much a shrinking from physical suffering as it was the heart-breaking struggle with the awful darkness and horror which seemed to be crushing the soul of the Master. Other men, in a less degree, have had similar experiences. Before meeting some great crisis in their lives, these men have felt a terrible darkness and despair settling upon them. They struggled frantically just as the men in the Black Hole of Calcutta struggled for air. It was as if all the fury of hell had been turned loose unhindered to stifle their souls. Then, silently, like the tide at flood, there came into their hearts a quiet peace and they faced the cross, the flame, the council, or the bitter taunt with a majestic calm.

It was such an experience as this, as some think, that the Master passed through. It was Gethsemane which produced the poise and calm that made Pilate marvel. It was Gethsemane which gave the peace of soul which was undisturbed by the crown of thorns, the denial of Peter, or the jeers and buffetings of the crowd. It was Gethsemane which gave to the world a picture of the depth of love in the heart of Jesus, the Christ.

*Study XIII. Fourth Day***The Arrest of Jesus. Mark 14: 43-52; Matt.
26: 47-56; Luke 22: 47-53**

Judas quietly left the upper room and notified the authorities that now was the time to arrest Jesus with the least disturbance. A motley crowd of servants and employees in the temple were quickly armed with any weapons at hand. Following Judas they went first to the place where Jesus had eaten the Passover, said by tradition to have been the home of John Mark. Not finding Jesus there, Judas naturally thought of the place to which Jesus was accustomed to retire, the garden of Gethsemane. Thither he led the crowd.

If tradition is correct in assigning the place of the Passover to the home of John Mark, then vv. 51-52 probably refer to Mark himself. He was perhaps asleep in a lower room when the noise of the crowd led by Judas awoke him. Quickly throwing a garment around himself, he followed the crowd toward Gethsemane, Judas rightly supposing that the Master had retired to this retreat for quiet.

“Let your imagination produce for you the scene in the garden — the moonlight, the flaring torches, the tensely eager forms moving about among the lights and shadows under the trees.”¹

The crowd reached the garden as Jesus was speaking, for the last time, to the three sleepy disciples. Judas approached Him and said, “Master, master; and kissed him.”

To read of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas makes us shudder and it calls for our admiration and reverence when we realize that the Master cherished no resentment or bitterness, but was only grieved at the fall of Judas.

The only protest of Jesus, on His arrest, was against the swords and staves with which the crowd was armed. He was willing to be tried by any just tribunal in the world. He had no intention of resisting, and He protested against one’s supposing that He would shed blood to save His own life. Read Mark 14: 43-52.

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

*Study XIII. Fifth Day***The Trial of Jesus Before the Sanhedrin. Mark 14: 53-65; Matt. 26: 57-68; Luke 22: 54, 63-71**

According to Luke, Jesus was guarded until morning and then tried before the council, the buffetings and indignities committed by the servants of the high priest occurring before the trial. This is probably correct, but as we are not concerned with the chronological details, we will continue to follow the account of Mark.

The Sanhedrin was not allowed to put a man to death. That authority rested with the Roman governor. This trial of Jesus, then, was not as much a trial as it was an examination by which the priests hoped to secure sufficient evidence to go to Pilate with the statement that Jesus aspired to be king. That would be treason against Cæsar. Read Mark 14: 53-65.

"Arrayed against Jesus on this awful night were the ecclesiastical hate, the religious bigotry, the political unscrupulousness of one of the most intense races of the world."¹

At this trial, Jesus made the first public statement of His Messiahship, v. 62, and at the same time affirmed His belief in the ultimate triumph of His life and work. Mark has expressed this in the language of the apocalyptic hopes of the early church.

Armed with this confession, the priests kept Jesus bound until they could carry Him to Pilate for trial.

In the meantime the servants and others spat on Him and, covering His face, slapped Him.

We have read these closing passages of the life of Jesus so often, that there is a danger of their becoming commonplace. Think of a great, strong man, for Jesus must have been physically powerful, who blazed at injustice done to others, especially the weak and helpless, yet endured personal abuse with calmness and without resentment.

¹ Studies in the Life of Jesus Christ. E. I. Bosworth. Copyrighted 1904. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York,

Study XIII. Sixth Day

The Denial of Peter and the Trial Before Pilate.

**Mark 14:66-15:15; Matt. 26:69-27:26; Luke
22:55-62, 23:1-25**

The prediction of Jesus regarding the desertion of the disciples came true. Peter alone had the courage to follow at a distance, and even he deserted Jesus at the last. Read Mark 14:66-72.

The faith of Jesus in mankind was misplaced in the case of Judas. Yet in the case of Peter it was abundantly rewarded. This over-zealous, impetuous, emotional, unsteady, Galilean fisherman, Jesus made into a leader of the early church who fearlessly appeared before councils and even faced death, so tradition tells us, without quailing.

In the early morning, as soon as Pilate would receive them, the Jews brought Jesus before the Roman governor.

Luke classifies the charges they made against Jesus as (1) perverting the nation, (2) refusing tribute to Cæsar, and (3) assuming to be king. It was the last charge which they pressed, and is the principal one given in Mark 15:1-3. Read Mark 15:1-5.

Is it any wonder that Pilate marveled? He had seen men agitated in situations less trying than that in which Jesus was placed. He had seen prisoners tremble and heard them beg for their lives. Others had summoned witnesses for their side and argued their cause logically and fervently. Some had not hesitated to offer bribes. Here was a man calm, undisturbed, and seemingly indifferent to his fate. He did not offer a bribe, and did not even make a personal reply to the charges against him: Pilate marveled.

Jesus knew what He was facing. The Jewish leaders had determined to kill Him. Whether right or wrong, nothing would satisfy them but His death. Jesus knew Pilate to be selfish, and hard, and cowardly in the face of danger to himself. Justice and right did not concern him unless it was convenient.

Therefore the Master answered nothing. It was as if He

had said to Pilate: "Why waste words? These priests are determined to have my life and you have not sufficient manhood to face the personal consequences of antagonizing them, even though justice and right are at stake."

As Jesus looked at Pilate, the Roman felt guilty. The prisoner became the judge and the judge became the prisoner. It was Pilate before Christ, not Christ before Pilate. Matthew says that Pilate took a basin of water and washed his hands of the affair. Responsibility cannot be so shifted. It was the task of Pilate to decide, and decide he must. Therefore he released unto them Barabbas. Read Mark 15:6-15.

Study XIII. Seventh Day

Review

1. Do we realize that Jesus desires from us the same overflowing love and devotion which the woman showed by her gift of the ointment? Christianity is not so much a system of thought or a theory of life as it is an attachment to a Person. It is love and friendship between the Master and us.

2. Let us think now of the profound faith of Jesus in mankind. He sees possibilities in us that we do not realize. Regardless of our past, He stands ready to lead us into paths of great usefulness if we will follow Him.

3. Jesus looked upon His death as a sacrifice for men. He could have avoided the cross. If He had so decided, how wretched this world would have been. Are we willing to follow in His train?

4. Jesus prayed for the cup to pass, but this request was not granted. Instead God gave Him strength to drink the cup to the bitter dregs. Can we pray to-day, "Not as I will but as Thou wilt, O God"?

5. Are we always fighting for our rights or can we bear personal injustice without resentment?

6. We have not the opportunity to deny our Lord as Peter did, but we do deny Him, by stating on the application for

admission that we have read six books of Virgil when we have read only four, by reporting sick when we cut class because we were unprepared in our lessons, by sending home for money to buy books and spending the money for pleasure, by abusing college property, by wiring for an extension of furlough on account of illness when no one is sick, by not paying our debts, by being a coward in the face of an evil which threatens us, by unkindness, by selfishness, by wrongdoing of any kind.

7. Do you ever try to shift your responsibility upon the shoulders of others? If it is yours to decide what is right or wrong, no technical excuses can shift the responsibility.

STUDY XIV. FIRST DAY

The Crucifixion of Jesus. Mark 15: 16-41; Matt.
27: 27-56; Luke 23: 26-49

Jesus was led away from the hall of Pilate for execution. Before starting on their way to Golgotha, Jesus was subjected to the rough, cruel jests and mockings of the Roman soldiers. One cannot conceive, on human grounds, how Jesus maintained His self-control under such provocation. Previous to this, He could have raised an army, if He had so desired, and crushed these soldiers, but that was not the way to ultimate triumph. Read Mark 15: 16-21.

Let us follow the group to the place of execution. When the coarse play of the soldiers is over, the procession starts for the place of crucifixion. Jesus is worn out with the awful tension of the past hours, and so another man, one Simon of Cyrene, is forced to bear His cross. . . . Golgotha is reached. The cross is laid on the ground and the Saviour is stretched upon it. Then fall the heavy blows of the huge hammer as the spikes are driven through the flesh, crushing the bones. The muscles of the arm tighten and twitch. A wave of suffering seems to surge over the limbs. The title which the Jews falsely accused Him of seeking, "The King of the Jews," is tacked in derision at the top of the upright. By means of ropes the cross is righted and settles in the ground with a sickening thud. Then the Master speaks. What is it He says? Is it a curse on the priests, is it a bitter complaint against the cowardly disciples, is it a cry for revenge, is it a tirade against Pilate? "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23: 34.) Thus He requites His murderers.

To the last, He loved men and gave His life for men that He might lead them into friendship with God. He is indeed our Saviour and the Saviour of the world, for He saved us

from lives of sin and selfishness and led us into paths of love and fellowship with God.

It was not unusual for men after crucifixion to hang on the cross two or three days before dying. The awful agony of soul, and the sad disappointment of rejected love, caused Jesus to die heartbroken in a few hours. Read Mark 15: 22-41.

"For the human race the death of Jesus was the transfiguration of all that he was and taught. This fact is expressed by the profound words, recorded in the Fourth Gospel: 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me.' It was the challenge to his race, to his generation, to the whole world to halt and to heed. History presents many illustrations of this principle. The tragic death of Lincoln, at the height of his power and usefulness, transfigured and ennobled the simplicity and beauty of his character and the greatness of his service for humanity. Jesus' death was the supreme demonstration that the one unfailing way in which sinners may be saved is the way of love and complete self-sacrifice. His death was the final, incontrovertible proof of his love and willingness to give himself for them and for all who needed his help.

"In an equally true and concrete sense it was the noblest expression of God's love for man. Thus Jesus' death transformed the friend of the disciples, and the shepherd of the lost sheep of Israel, into the Saviour of the world, and expressed the purpose and meaning of his life in terms intelligible to all ages and races."¹

Study XIV. Second Day

**The Burial and Resurrection of Jesus. Mark 15:
42-16: 20; Matt. 27: 57-28: 20; Luke 23:
50-24: 53**

The disciples fled from the Master at the time of the crucifixion, but the tragic event brought forth friends who

¹ The Life and Teachings of Jesus. C. F. Kent. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

had quietly followed Jesus, and who were unknown before. Joseph of Arimathea was one of these. He asked for the dead body of Jesus and after preparations for burial laid it in his own tomb. Read Mark 15:42-47.

What a pitiable ending to such a promising life! A stranger, passing through Jerusalem at that time, saw the lonely burial procession and inquired about it. The Roman centurion told him: "This man," and he pointed to the cross, "had an idea that he was born to be king of the Jews. He was evidently not the kind of king they wanted therefore they got Pilate to kill him. But he was man enough to be king of any Jews I have ever seen. He faced Pilate with a poise and calm that made the procurator wonder. He endured the buffetings and jeers of the guard without wincing and was nailed to that cross without a murmur. It's strange how some people become obsessed with queer ideas at times. But it's all over now." And the centurion marshaled the guard for the return to the city.

The stranger next inquired of a Jew, in the circle of the high priest, about this king. "What, this impostor!" said the Jew. "He assuming to be our Messiah! Nothing but a carpenter from Nazareth who drew together some publicans and sinners for his disciples and then, denouncing the religious leaders, said he was the Christ. But that's the end of him and it'll be a good warning to any other such pretenders." And the Jew went toward the city.

The stranger then approached Joseph of Arimathea as he was leaving the tomb and inquired of Joseph about the friend he had just buried. Joseph quietly said: "You know we have been looking for God to send His chosen one to restore the Kingdom to Israel and to rule over our nation in righteousness. Many of us thought Jesus," and he nodded toward the tomb, "was the one. He taught as no one has ever taught us. He had a great, deep, loving heart. He was courageous and fearless. He had a personality which drew you to him. He said he was the Messiah but he would not let his followers fight for him. Although my life is nobler by having known him, his death is a sad disappointment to us." And Joseph went on his way.

Dismayed and disappointed, the disciples wended their

way toward Galilee. Jesus was dead. Their hopes had been dashed to the ground, their hearts were sad. They would remain in quiet obscurity for a few days until the wave of popular clamor had subsided and danger to themselves had passed. Then they would take up their daily tasks again.

But suddenly this group of frightened, dismayed disciples reappeared in public with the astonishing proclamation that their Teacher had risen from the dead and had appeared before them. So absolutely convinced of this fact were they, that they began to spread the news in all directions and not one but many laid down their lives in the faith that it was true. Read Mark 16:1-20.

Study XIV. Third Day

The Resurrection of Jesus (concluded). I Cor. 15:1-8; Acts 9:1-7

Let us consider to-day what actually happened regarding the resurrection of Jesus. Read Luke 24:1-53. Did the physical body of Jesus which was dead come forth from the tomb?

Perhaps the account of the appearance of Jesus to Paul on the road to Damascus may help, as this is the earliest account we have of the resurrection, and as Paul classifies this appearance to him as the same as the appearances to the other disciples. Read I Corinthians 15:1-8 and Acts 9:1-7.

It is evident that the appearance to Paul was a spiritual manifestation and not actual contact with a physical body. Moreover, the idea of Paul of the future life is that of a spiritual existence in which our physical body is transformed into a spiritual body as was that of our Lord Jesus Christ. If the resurrected body of Jesus was physical, the accounts which speak of the Master appearing in a closed room with all doors locked and again as vanishing from sight are evidently inconsistent with such a theory. It must also be realized that the task of the early church was not to prove the divinity of Jesus but to prove His humanity. His spir-

itual presence was so manifested that those who had not known Jesus while on earth, began to ask if He ever actually lived as a man. This naturally gave a materialistic tone to the accounts of the resurrection.

On the other hand, the theory that the enthusiasm of the disciples arose from a return of their love for Jesus, and from intense meditation upon His teaching, and upon the Jewish scriptures in the light of the crucifixion, does not adequately account for the remarkable change in these Galileans. Many of the disciples never fully comprehended the scope and nature of the mission of Jesus. If contact and conversation with Him while on earth could not enlighten their minds, how could it be accomplished by meditation, after a blow as crushing as the crucifixion?

Moreover, untrained men do not lay down their lives for the sake of theories logically deduced which have no basis in fact. Occasionally one may do so, but here is a large group of men dismayed, bewildered, and frightened, who suddenly face the world with the declaration that their Teacher who was dead has appeared to them and in proof of their conviction, suffer persecution and death. Had it not been for this conviction, we to-day would not be studying the life of Jesus, for the Gospels would not have been written. Had it not been for this conviction, the Christian church would not have been founded. Although the writer does not believe in a physical resurrection, he knows that something happened after the crucifixion and that something, inconsistent as this statement may seem, he believes to be as much a fact of history as the crucifixion of Jesus. Certain it is, that the something that did happen which we call the resurrection, convinced the disciples that Jesus was with them and, as some one has expressed it, "No matter whether what they saw could be photographed or not they felt the personality of Jesus. The perfectly spiritualized body was there."

The results cannot be questioned, therefore the cause must be adequate.

Study XIV. Fourth Day

Obedience and Unselfish Service the Path to Intellectual Comprehension

We have now completed the study of the life of Jesus. We have avoided all theological discussions and with the exception of the resurrection, have postponed the question of miracles. We have sought to picture the man Jesus and to study the principles of His teachings. What, then, is there for the man who can go no further, the man to whom the resurrection appears as an hallucination and to whom God is unknown?

In the first place, everyone knows that he is living. We may doubt everything but our own existence and even attempt to disprove that, but actually we have to live and we know it. If we have to live, we want to live on the highest possible plane. Then we should hold fast to the truth that we have and live our lives, as far as possible, according to the example and principles of Jesus. We are to be kind and willing to share with others; we are to be courageous; we are to detest hypocrisy and snobbishness; we are to be cheerful; we are to be pure; we are to be honest; we are to be truthful; and we are to be unselfish in active service for others. Jesus came not to give us a theological system but a way of life. The only avenue to a proper intellectual conception of Christ is through following Him.

A teacher may tell you that by mixing two chemicals a certain precipitate will be formed. You may doubt it, you may argue about it, you may meditate upon it, but you should try it. You may doubt the existence of God, Jesus may be only a man, the immortality of the soul a mere dream, but you should not brood over such questions, but try to follow in the footsteps of the Master. Is there a student going down through drink or gambling? Try to help him. Is there dishonesty in athletics? Then fight it. Is there a group of immigrants near you needing help? Then spend yourself for them. Is there a struggling ex-convict

needing a job? Get him one. Is there a lonely man needing a friend? Then be a friend to him. Is there a heartsick mother craving affection? Then show a little. Is there a child-labor law needed? Then advocate it. Move, serve, love, act, do something in accord with the fearless, loving principles of Jesus, and soon there will come into your life a certainty about spiritual truths about which you are now uncertain. You will not only think that they are true, you will know that they are true, for they will be facts of experience tested in the laboratory of life.

Dr. E. L. Trudeau, the eminent physician of Saranac Lake, expressed this thought when he said: "The more I live, the more I feel that what we need is Faith, Faith in the simple teaching of Christ as a moving force in our lives, not as merely something to theorize about. I do not believe anyone ever gets Faith—the real kind of Faith—by learned books or discussions, but simply through living it."

"If there be no God and no future state, yet even then," said Frederick W. Robertson, "it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. . . . Thrice blessed is he who—when all is drear and cheerless—has obstinately clung to moral good. Thrice blessed, because his night shall pass into clear, bright day."¹

"If any man will to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:17.

We come back then to the subject of the study for to-day. Obedience and unselfish service is the path to intellectual comprehension of Jesus Christ.

Study XIV. Fifth Day

The Essence of Religion

Yesterday we asserted that regardless of the doubts or unbeliefs of a man he should live in accordance with the

¹ Quoted from *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*. F. G. Peabody. The Macmillan Company. New York.

life and teachings of Jesus. To-day, we wish to show that living a good life was, according to Jesus, the supreme requirement of religion. Let us look back over these studies and realize how little thought Jesus gave to creeds, ritual, or churchmanship. Not that Jesus condemned creeds or churches, for He did not. They are necessary adjuncts in the development and nurture of the religious life. But they are means, not ends. He continually laid the emphasis on actually doing the will of God. It was a glorification of the tasks of everyday life, it was an uncompromising attitude toward evil, it was open-mindedness, repentance, self-control, self-forgetfulness, mercy, purity, the use of one's talents, social democracy, righteousness, equity, faith in the ultimate triumph of right, self-sacrifice, love, that Jesus continually taught. In the account of Jesus of the last judgment, men are judged by their lives. It is the fruit by which the tree is judged. It is not the labels but the contents which are to be examined. Who then can enter the Kingdom of Heaven, the churchman, the evangelist, the orthodox, the philanthropist? Perhaps, but not unless they have done the will of the Father who is in Heaven.

Who is the foolish man? The man who hears and believes but does not live according to his beliefs. Who is the wise man? The man who hears, believes, and lives according to his beliefs.

Who are the friends and brothers of Jesus, what kind of relatives did He want? "Whosoever shall *do* the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Dean Hodges expressed it thus: "He cared about conduct. He wanted to make men honest, and pure, and helpful, and thus to increase the happiness of life. . . . He died in defense of the proposition that true religion is essentially moral, and that the supreme requirement of religion is character." ¹

¹ Everyman's Religion. George Hodges. Copyrighted 1911. Used by permission of the Macmillan Company. New York.

Study XIV. Sixth Day

The Motive Power — The Living Christ

After studying the life of Jesus by a method similar to that which we have pursued, a Chinese student remarked at this point, "It is easy to say, 'Live a good life,' but how are you going to do it?" In other words, it is easy to place ideals before ourselves but we need power to realize the ideals in our lives. It is here that Christianity differs from the non-Christian religions. It is a religion of power. This was the message which Paul sounded in the ears of the Roman world, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Men long since had had exalted ideas placed before them, but they needed a dynamic in their lives in order to produce character such as the ideas portrayed. What is there then in the Christian religion which accounts for this power? What was it which made the cowardly disciples become fearless and courageous? They said it was the presence of the Risen Christ.

The expression, "In Christ," or "in the Lord" is repeated as if it were a refrain in the letters of Paul until in Galatians 2:20, he says, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me."

It is often said of a man that he needs a strong friend to keep him steady. The early apostles said that the Risen Christ was with them as such a friend. They felt their lives charged with the unseen but real presence of Christ.

What was the dynamic in the life of Jesus? It could not have been merely His own presence. It was His relationship with the Father and His sense of the presence and approval of God. It was into this relationship that Jesus endeavored to lead men.

When we speak of friendship with Christ and friendship with God, we are not referring to different relationships. "We cannot say that we have an experience of communion with Jesus which is distinguishable from our experience of communion with God," says Henry Sloane Coffin; "we respond through Jesus to God. But if our God be the God of

Jesus, we cannot think of Jesus as anywhere in the universe out of fellowship with Him. His God would not be Himself, nor would Jesus be Himself, were the fellowship between Them interrupted; and we cannot think of ourselves as in touch with the One, without being at the same time in touch with the Other.”¹

Define the Christian dynamic as you please, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, the Living Christ, there is a power in Christianity which comes by the indwelling presence of the Infinite.

“Yet, if it is true,” says Durant Drake, “that salvation has come in greater or lesser degree to multitudes of men of all faiths, it is also true that it has come in the most striking measure through Christ. No other power ever let loose in the world has accomplished nearly so much in freeing men from the bondage of sin as the power of his life and death. The great highroad of deliverance for sin-ridden men is that of overcoming evil with good; a great love, a great loyalty, can banish temptations against which a direct struggle is futile. So a spiritual union with Christ has for millions wrought that transformation of character which we call regeneration; and the surest way to save men who have sunk far into sin has proved to be, after winning their will to repent, to bring them to Christ.”²

“But,” says some one, “you are speaking with practical certainty of a mystical experience. I never had such an experience.” We speak of friendship with Christ as a fact because to those realizing His presence, it is a fact. If the testimony of thousands of straightforward, self-sacrificing, transformed Christians is of any value, then it is a fact, and an experience within the reach of everybody.

A few suggestions may aid in realizing such an experience. First, a friendship with Christ can be cultivated by a devotional study of His life and teachings in order that our ideals of life and conduct may be clarified. Secondly, we may cultivate His friendship by regular communion in prayer. If your faith is weak, make in sincerity, such a prayer as this.

¹ Some Christian Convictions. H. S. Coffin. Copyrighted 1915. Used by permission of the Yale University Press. New Haven.

² Problems of Religion. Durant Drake. Copyrighted 1916. Used by permission of the Houghton Mifflin Co. Boston,

"O Christ, if it be possible for You to dwell in my soul, do Thou enter." Lastly and supremely important, we must be willing to follow His guidance. If you reject every advance Christ makes, how can you expect a friendship to develop? Have you refused to face the mission appeal, do you cling to some favorite sin, do you refuse openings for unselfish service, have you stifled the voice of conscience within you, do you trump up excuses when duty calls? Then it ought not to seem strange that friendship with Christ is unknown to you. If you are willing to follow the promptings of the still small voice within you, every step forward will find you closer to Him.

On the other hand, there are a few tests a man may apply to his life by which he may know that he is in friendship with Christ.

First, there is the test of life. Do you cheat in examinations, do you take books or magazines from the library and not return them, do you crowd on a street car without paying your fare, did you keep your football jersey when you promised to turn in all your equipment at the end of the season, do you use the stamps of the firm for your own private correspondence, do you take towels from hotels and keep them for your own use, do you intentionally "beat the gun" at the start of a track race, would you claim exemption from military service on the ground of dependent parents when your father and mother were financially independent and you did not contribute anything to their support, do you lie, do you accept graft, do you give men short weight, do you "skip your rent"? Then, no matter how emotionally stirred you may become, or how many churches you may belong to, Jesus dwells not in your life neither are you a friend of Him. But from those who honestly try to live the Christlike life, Jesus is not far distant.

Secondly, friendship with Christ makes service a pleasure. Religion ceases to be a round of burdensome, calculated duties, but becomes spontaneous service, prompted by love. A man was heard to remark that if he had known before marriage all the trouble, sickness, and pecuniary burdens that married life involved, he would never have married. Another man, who has borne greater cares and responsibilities, remarked that if he had known before what to expect, he

would have been married as quickly. What was the difference between the men? One loved his wife, the other did not. To the first one, married life was a burdensome duty. To the other, it was an opportunity for joyful service for those he loved. The soldiers in the A. E. F. did not have to be driven into battle or chained to machine guns. Battle was a supreme opportunity to fight or die for a cause and country they loved.

Similarly, when we enter into friendship with Christ, a song springs up in our hearts, and service in His name becomes a real joy. The element of self-sacrifice disappears from our minds.

Last of all, friendship with Christ produces in us a love of human beings as human beings. It matters not whether they are Baptist or Methodist, Catholic or Jew, Negro or White, Chinese or Hindoo, French or German, servant or king, if they are human, we love them. If we have fellowship with Christ, we do not serve others because it is our duty, or in order to talk religion to them afterward. We serve them because we love them.

Study XIV. Seventh Day

“What Think Ye of Christ?” The Divinity of Jesus

“And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the place of toll, and he saith unto him, Follow me.”

Jesus did not merely formulate the principles of the Kingdom of God and endeavor, as a salesman, to interest men in them. He placed the principles before men, and then commanded men to follow Him in living by them. He did not merely submit plans for consideration but He drew plans and commanded men to build. He astonished the multitudes, for He taught as one having authority. He antagonized the priests by driving the money brokers from the temple and speaking as if endowed with the authority of a divine commission,

"Who is this man?" the priests ask. "What right has he to assume charge of the temple? Is this authority mere assumption or do the man and his message justify it?" Is this Jesus of Nazareth a teacher only, or has he the right to command the full allegiance of our lives even to-day? It is this question we wish to discuss at this time.

Let us consider for a moment the teachings of Jesus. One is impressed by the fact that they are universal in scope. Jesus is perhaps the only man who fully realized that mankind, regardless of race or environment, was and always would be fundamentally the same. His teachings then are not local or racial but are world-wide and eternal in that they meet the fundamental needs of all men. Yet Jesus came of a most intensely clannish and exclusive people.

A second noticeable feature is the completeness of the teachings of Jesus. You find summarized in His words a complete program of life, embracing the best in all other ethical systems. We find in His teachings answers to the fundamental questions, Why are we here, Whither are we going, How shall we accomplish our task? Moreover, this conception of God and life, adequate as it is for our needs, is set forth with perfect simplicity, and not interwoven with unnecessary words and ideas which the subsequent growth of knowledge has had to discard. Indeed we should add as our fourth point that the teachings of Jesus are remarkable for what they do not contain.¹ It was as if a font of type was spread on a table and a master printer picked out the good type, leaving the imperfect to be melted anew. As John Douglas Adam put it: "This is what students of comparative religion as well as simple disciples of Christ discover in our day—that Christ gathers the broken, scattered revelations of God into a focused unity in himself. It is not that other religions are wholly false, it is simply that Christ makes a full-orbed, all-inclusive revelation of God, sufficient for human need. As a matter of historical fact, every other revelation of God since has either been an echo, a dilution, or a perversion of that which is in Christ."² In nearly all

¹ *The Ethics of Jesus.* H. C. King. The Macmillan Company. New York.

² *Under the Highest Leadership.* J. D. Adam. Copyrighted 1917. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York,

lines of knowledge we have left the first century far behind but the ideals of this obscure Carpenter of Nazareth are still the distant goal toward which humanity is striving.

Another noticeable characteristic is the fact that the teachings of Jesus are free from the current superstitions of His time. With the possible exception of belief in demoniac possession, we find that Jesus brushed aside current superstitions, useless traditions, and false customs, giving them no place in His teachings or life. As Horace Bushnell expressed it: "He lived in a superstitious age and among a superstitious people. He was a person of low education, and nothing, as we know, clings to the uneducated mind with the tenacity of a superstition. Lord Bacon, for example, a man certainly of the very highest intellectual training, was yet harmed by superstitions too childish to be named with respect, and which clung to him despite of all his philosophy, even to his death. But Christ, with no learned culture at all, comes forth out of Galilee, as perfectly clean of all the superstitions of his time, as if he had been a disciple, from his childhood, of Hume or Strauss. 'You children of superstition think,' he says, 'that those Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, and those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, must have been monsters, to suffer such things. I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' To another company he says—'You imagine, in your Pharisaic and legal morality, that the Sabbath of Moses stands in the letter; but I tell you that the Sabbath is made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; little honor, therefore, do you pay to God, when you teach that it is not lawful to do good on this day. Your washings are a great point, you tithe herbs and seeds with a sanctimonious fidelity, would it not be as well for you teachers of the law, to have some respect to the weightier matters of justice, faith, and benevolence?' Thus, while Socrates, one of the greatest and purest of human souls, a man who has attained to many worthy conceptions of God, hidden from his idolatrous countrymen, is constrained to sacrifice a cock to Esculapius, the uneducated Jesus lives and dies superior to every superstition of his time; believing nothing because it is believed, respecting nothing because it is sanctified by custom and by

human observance. Even in the closing scene of his life, we see his learned and priestly associates refusing to go into the judgment-hall of Caiaphas, lest they should be ceremonially defiled and disqualified for the feast; though detained by no scruple at all as regards the instigation of a murder! While he, on the other hand, pitying their delusions, prays for them from his cross—‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’”¹

Again, Jesus was warped by no desire to gain assent. He spoke the truth uncompromisingly. In speaking of this trait Horace Bushnell said: “. . . he never reveals the infirmity so commonly shown by human teachers, when they veer a little from their point, or turn their doctrine off by shades of variation, to catch the assent of multitudes. He never conforms to an expectation, even of his friends. When they look to find a great prophet in him, he offers nothing in the modes of the prophets. When they ask for places of distinction in his kingdom, he rebukes their folly, and tells them he has nothing to give, but a share in his reproaches and his poverty. When they look to see him take the sword as the Great Messiah of their nation, calling the people to his standard, he tells them he is no warrior and no king, but only a messenger of love to lost men; one that has come to minister and die, but not to set up or restore the kingdom. Every expectation that rises up to greet him, is repulsed; and yet, so great is the power of his manner, that multitudes are held fast, and cannot yield their confidence. Enveloped as he is in the darkest mystery, they trust him still; going after him, hanging on his words, as if detained by some charmed influence, which they cannot shake off or resist. Never was there a teacher that so uniformly baffled every expectation of his followers, never one that was followed so persistently.”¹

Finally, think of the content of the teachings of Jesus. His teachings about God, about man, about love, about inward righteousness, about friendship with the Father are, we find,

¹ *The Character of Jesus.* H. Bushnell. Copyrighted 1886. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

truths not primarily emphasized in the non-Christian religions.

Jesus, however, was not a mere collector of religious maxims; it was the emphasis and importance which He placed upon the great essentials of life and truth which distinguish Him as the supreme teacher of the ages.

Durant Drake says: "His insight into human nature, his direct, straightforward perception of moral truths, together with his natural talent for expression, gave him a felicity of utterance which has never been surpassed. Capable upon occasion of subtle argumentation, overflowing now and then into genial humor, biting irony, or flash of wit, but in general homely in his language, and free from the useless verbiage of the schools, keen and quick at epigram and paradox, with a gift at simile and parable, his sayings remain to-day among the most memorable—many of us would say the most memorable—of the spiritual teachings of all times. Free from all servitude to the orthodoxy of his day, following always his own vision, and calling to his disciples, 'Why of yourselves judge ye not what is right?' his words must have been of rare stimulating power. He uttered few truths, if any, that had not been expressed before; but in the clarity, terseness, and limpid simplicity of his phrasing, rid as it is of so much that repels or mars the vision in the utterances of earlier and later teachers, we have reason enough to understand how his auditors 'wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth.'" ¹

As a teacher of moral and spiritual truth, both as to form and content, Jesus stands unique in history.

¹ Problems of Religion. Durant Drake. Copyrighted 1916. Used by permission of the Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston.

STUDY XV. FIRST DAY

The Divinity of Jesus (concluded)

Having discussed Jesus as a teacher, let us examine the character of Jesus to-day as we would that of any other man.

The first noticeable characteristic is the perfect balance of His character. If we will think a minute, we shall realize that Jesus possessed in a supreme degree the best traits of all other men. On the other hand, He was without their weaknesses. If we were asked to name the weak points of the character of Jesus in contrast with His strong points, we should be at a loss what to mention, for the traits of His many-sided character seemed to be in a supreme degree evenly distributed.¹

Neither is this perfectly balanced character an imaginary picture drawn by the evangelists. Some such a figure as Jesus must have been historical, for as Mr. Parker expressed this thought: "Suppose that Plato and Newton never lived. But who did their wonders, and who thought their thought? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. What man could have fabricated a Jesus? None but a Jesus."² Rousseau said that the inventor of such a character would be far more astounding than his hero.¹ Miraculous stories could easily be the creation of the imagination but the superb abstract traits of character portrayed in the life of Jesus are facts beyond the imagination and could be understood and described only when expressed in the acts of everyday life. If the evangelists had been drawing on their imaginations for the character of our Lord, inconsistencies would have been recorded

¹ Christ and the Students. John R. Mott. Record of Christian Work. September, 1908. Used by permission.

² The Character of Jesus. H. Bushnell. Copyrighted 1886. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

which would have marred the picture, and cast reasonable doubt upon the reality of such a life. This, as we shall see in the next study, actually occurred with regard to the miracles. First, then, we are impressed by the perfect balance of the character of Jesus.

Another remarkable characteristic is that Jesus disavowed repentance and lived up to this denial of sin. Never do we hear a petition for forgiveness pass His lips and more remarkable still we cannot see in His life or words anything inconsistent with this avowal of sinlessness. Even more remarkable is the fact that this profession and all others, including that of His unique relationship with God, are attested by His own inner consciousness. Suppose we should pretend to be sinless or, in a special sense, divine. Our lives and consciences would soon belie us and we should break down under such false pretensions. But the inner and outer life of Jesus support His assumption even to the end.¹ "Human piety," said Horace Bushnell, "begins with repentance. It is the effort of a being, implicated in wrong and writhing under the stings of guilt, to come unto God. The most righteous, or even self-righteous men, blend expressions of sorrow and vows of new obedience with their exercises. But Christ, in the character given him, never acknowledges sin. It is the grand peculiarity of his piety that he never regrets anything that he has done or been; expresses, nowhere, a single feeling of compunction, or the least sense of unworthiness. On the contrary, he boldly challenges his accusers, in the question — Which of you convinceth me of sin? and even declares, at the close of his life, in a solemn appeal to God, that he has given to men, unsullied, the glory divine that was deposited in him. . . . And no mere human creature, it is certain, could hold such a religious attitude, without shortly displaying faults that would cover him with derision, or excesses and delinquencies that would even disgust his friends. Piety without one dash of repentance, one ingenuous confession of wrong, one tear, one look of contrition, one request to heaven for pardon — let any one of mankind try this kind of piety, and see how long it will be

¹ *The Deity of Jesus*. R. E. Speer. The F. H. Revell Co. New York.

ere his righteousness will prove itself to be the most impudent conceit! how long before his passions sobered by no contrition, his pride kept down by no repentance, will tempt him into absurdities that will turn his pretenses to mockery! No sooner does any one of us begin to be self-righteous, than he begins to fall into outward sins that shame his conceit. But, in the case of Jesus, no such disaster follows. Beginning with an impenitent or unrepentant piety, he holds it to the end, and brings no visible stain upon it.”¹

Another remarkable characteristic of Jesus was His astonishing assumptions. He professed to have established the Kingdom of God on earth. He declared Himself to be the spokesman of God, calling on men to follow Him, “laying his hand upon all the dearest and most intimate affections of life, and demanding a precedent love—‘he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me.’ . . . [It was] as if to follow him and be worthy of him was to be the conclusive or chief excellence of mankind!”¹ He died in the belief that His Kingdom would ultimately triumph and that He had overcome the world.

In studying the character of Jesus we should realize that His teachings are a reflection of His character, otherwise the abstract principles He sought to teach would have made no impression upon and would have been unintelligible to His followers. E. A. Cook expressed this thought when he said: “Abstract principles are always in danger of being lost in the forms in which they are stated or in the minds of those who have not learned to grasp or to value principles in abstract form. But a definite, divine, heroic figure, with a name and history easily grasped, whose life illustrates such abstract principles in ways readily understood by the simplest and most unlearned, is of inestimable value in the maintenance of such principles as living forces among men.”²

Then, too, argue as we will, the resurrection of Jesus as we discussed it in Study XIV is a fact which cannot be explained away.

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² Christian Faith for Men of To-Day. E. A. Cook. Copyrighted 1913. Used by permission of the University of Chicago Press. Chicago.

Last of all, think of the influence of Jesus in the lives of men to-day. Not only Jerry McCauley and Samuel Hadley, but David Livingstone and Robert Morrison, and thousands of others have testified that the power of Jesus, the Risen Christ, has redeemed them from lives of sin and selfishness and is the dynamic which moves them forward in paths of love and service. "Where in all human experience," says John Douglas Adam, "is there any such escape from moral failure into triumphant moral achievement as in the lives of those who bear witness to having accepted forgiveness from Christ? There is no story of moral restoration, of renewed enthusiasm, of recovered joy, of fresh conscious oneness with the will of God, and of humble contrition, in the whole of human literature which compares with the testimony of a believing Christian."¹

There is only one conclusion that we can reasonably reach in reflecting upon these facts. It is, that Jesus was not just a mere man. [For] "if Jesus Christ was only a man," said Robert E. Speer, "if His character was merely human, then Bowdoin College, Yale, Bryn Mawr and Vassar ought to be turning out better men and women than He was. If Jesus Christ was only a man, it is strange that the nineteenth century cannot produce a better one. He was born in an obscure and contemptible province. He grew up in no cultured and refined community. He was a child of a poor peasant's home, of a lowly menial race. Yet He rises sheer above all humanity, the one commanding moral character of mankind. Now, if Jesus was all that just as a mere man, the world should long ago have advanced beyond Him."²

The writer believes, then, that Jesus was, in a special and supreme sense, divine. When we use the word "divine" regarding Jesus, it has for us the same meaning as when we say that we believe there is a germ of the divine latent in all humanity. We believe that in us the instinctive reaching-out after God, the feeling of dependence upon the Infinite, the natural turning to prayer and worship, the moral sense

¹ Under the Highest Leadership. J. D. Adam. Copyrighted 1917. Used by permission of the Association Press. New York.

² The Deity of Jesus. R. E. Speer. Used by permission of the F. H. Revell Company. New York.

which decides between right and wrong, all arise from a divine spark which God has implanted within. The writer believes, furthermore, that every human being has this divine spark in him, and that in essence it is the same as the divine in Jesus. The difference between Him and us is a difference in degree.

We stifle the voice, we refuse to obey its promptings, and hence our hearts are faint and our grasp of the Infinite feeble. Jesus, however, followed absolutely the voice of God within Him. Every inner prompting of the Father He obeyed completely. Day by day, then, God revealed Himself more and more to Jesus until the union between them was perfect and God completely expressed Himself in human life through the personality of His Son. In this unique sense, Jesus was the beloved Son of God in whom the Father was well pleased. He, as no man, before or since, as far as we know, reached those heights of obedience to the will of God so that He could say, in the language of the Fourth Gospel, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work," and "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The writer does not believe in the preëxistence of Jesus as a separate person in the Godhead who came into this world as a divine machine functioning in human life. He does believe He was a man in whom God could and did completely reveal Himself, and through whom He absolutely expressed Himself to the world.

Some may object to the conclusion that Jesus was the Son of God on the grounds that we are assuming the existence of God. If then there be no God, Jesus Himself should be the object of our worship, for we cannot conceive of God in terms higher than those exemplified in the life and teachings of Jesus. God, to us, is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, we must admit that the basis of the life of Jesus was His absolute conviction of the existence of God and the further conviction of His unique relationship with the Father. "We are weak, dragged down by animal instincts and impulses," said the author of "The Religion of Christ in the Twentieth Century;" "helpless often, before the sins which do so easily beset us: the religious consciousness of Jesus kept him, not only pure in deed, but pure in heart. . . . We

are selfish, lovers of ease, concerned for personal comfort: the religious consciousness of Jesus held him tranquil when he knew not where to lay his head. . . . We are troubled about many things, eager for possessions: the religious consciousness of Jesus kept him free from the clutch of material things, held him peacefully assured that even food and raiment are but things to be added unto the true life. . . . We are despondent, morose, afraid to be glad: the religious consciousness of Jesus led him to rejoice in the beauty of the world, made him no less welcome at the feast than in the house of mourning. We are hampered at every turn by conventions, concerned for the outside of the platter: the religious consciousness of Jesus held ever clearly before him the true values of life. . . . We are dull of sight, given to miserable misunderstandings: the religious consciousness of Jesus gave him a quick and sure insight into the hearts of men and women, so that the common people heard him gladly and all the city was gathered together at his door. We are bitter, unforgiving, ungenerous: the religious consciousness of Jesus enabled him to forgive all things, because 'they know not what they do.' We are cowardly, afraid of suffering, physical and mental, afraid, continually, of what may happen: the religious consciousness of Jesus rendered him absolutely fearless, capable of defying without hesitation a religious conservatism bitterly intolerant and vindictive, carried him from one danger to another with a courage quiet, steady, magnificent. We are cold, indifferent, unsympathetic: the religious consciousness of Jesus filled him with a compassion so profound, so tender, so mighty, that the very sound of his voice, and touch of his hand, brought healing to the sick in body and in mind. . . . In brief, the religious consciousness of Jesus made his life, so full of privation, discouragement, and suffering, the life that, whatever may be our creed, we all know in our hearts was the life preëminently worth living."¹ And this "religious consciousness" of Jesus was based upon the inward surety that He was doing the will of God, the Father.

"Again and again in the history of mankind men of God

¹ *The Religion of Christ in the Twentieth Century*. Copyrighted. Used by permission of the G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York.

have come forward in the sure consciousness of possessing a divine message, and of being compelled, whether they will or not, to deliver it. But the message has always happened to be imperfect; in this spot or that, defective; bound up with political or particularistic elements; designed to meet the circumstances of the moment; and very often the prophet did not stand the test of being himself an example of his message. But in this case the message brought was of the profoundest and most comprehensive character; it went to the very root of mankind and, although set in the framework of the Jewish nation, it addressed itself to the whole of humanity—the message from God the Father. Defective it is not, and its real kernel may be readily freed from the inevitable husk of contemporary form. Antiquated it is not, and in life and strength it still triumphs to-day over all the past. He who delivered it has as yet yielded his place to no man, and to human life he still to-day gives a meaning and an aim—he *the Son of God.*"¹

"And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias: and others, One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ."

"And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the place of toll, and he saith unto him, Follow me." To-day He is saying to you and to me in the loving, authoritative voice of the chosen one of God, "Follow me."

"If Jesus Christ is a man,
And only a man, I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him I cleave alway.

"If Jesus Christ is a God,
And the only God, I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air."

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

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Study XV. Second Day

The Miracles

Let us state in the beginning of this discussion of the miracles, that we are not arguing a question of possibility but of probability. The question is not, Could the miracles have happened? but, Did they happen? Almost anything can happen but not everything does happen. Belief in the literal interpretation of the miracles is not a question of faith in the power of God but a question of historical evidence.

The writer believes, then, that many of the miracles actually occurred, and that they can be easily explained on the basis of the psychic effect of a strong mind and personality upon a weaker one. The men of Jesus' day believed that the universe was peopled with spirits. Becoming melancholy, a man would imagine that an evil spirit was haunting him, until he became mentally unbalanced.

Other cases of demoniac possession, the writer believes, were merely cases of insanity, in a greater or less degree. We see to-day evidence of the remarkable effects of belief and will upon the ailments of the body. Surely the influence of Jesus was no less potent. The writer does not believe, however, that Jesus actually walked on the water, that five thousand people were physically fed with only five loaves and two small fishes, that the tempest was quieted by a word; but he does believe that the lame walked, the deaf heard, in some cases the blind saw, and "demons" were cast out, just as such cures are effected by natural psychological causes to-day. We shall notice that in many cases, Jesus first stimulated the faith of the person in question, and that in other cases, people were healed by touching His garment without any volition on the part of Jesus whatever. See Mark 3:10, 5:28, 6:56, 7:33, 8:23. Mark distinctly says, that in Nazareth "Jesus *could* there *do* no mighty work . . ."

We notice also that Jesus did not attach particular importance to His miracles. He refused to give the Pharisees a sign, showing that the recognition of His person and mission rested on higher grounds. The question of the Pharisees

also shows that it is evident that all the miracles were not actually performed as many suppose, for the Pharisees would not have made the request if such had been the case.

Burkitt adds, "Nay more, occurrences which are certainly narrated as 'miracles' by the Evangelist did not greatly impress even the disciples themselves. That on at least two occasions Jesus and His disciples had found themselves far away in the open country in the presence of large crowds without means of feeding them, and that nevertheless, when they made them sit down as for a meal, there was more than enough and to spare, is attested by the narrative in Mark 8:11-21, a narrative which it is impossible not to regard as derived from genuine historical reminiscence. Yet the same passage shews us that the apostles had not been influenced by the events of these two meals, a circumstance which would be indeed incredible if these events had come to pass in the way generally supposed. What actually happened is of course quite beyond our power to ascertain: we only know that the same document that tells us of the wonderful meals tells us also of the distress of the apostles when shortly afterwards they found they were running short of provisions."¹

The only conclusion we can reach is that expressed by Dr. Sanday: "We may be sure that if the miracles of the first century had been wrought before trained spectators of the nineteenth, the version of them would be quite different."²

It would have been strange, indeed, if miraculous stories had not grown up around such a life as that of Jesus Christ. Here was the most commanding and lovable personality, we think, the world has ever seen. He cast out "demons" and appeared alive after He was dead. He lived at a time when, as Harnack says, "people felt and saw that they were surrounded by wonders, not by any means only in the religious sphere."³ "The Messiah would of course work miracles," said one writer in the *Biblical World*. "Jesus healed the de-

¹ The Gospel History and Its Transmission. F. C. Burkitt. Used by permission of the Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.

² Dictionary of the Bible. James Hastings. T. and T. Clark. The Charles Scribner's Sons.

³ What Is Christianity? A. Harnack. The G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York.

monized: why should he not heal nature? The distinction that we should make would not have occurred to them. So the beautiful story of the stilling of the tempest. If demons could disturb the human consciousness, perhaps they could blow the waters of the lake into billows. And the authoritative voice that could say to the legion of demons, 'Be gone,' could say to the winds, 'Be still.' Perhaps some actual occurrence produced the narrative. Perhaps in some storm the strong courage and faith of Jesus calmed the fearful fishermen, and the waves, heightened by their terror, were less dangerous as they regained their poise. And so the story grew that he had stilled the tempest. And the beautiful symbolic significance (perhaps, after all, the chief value of any miracle story) may have helped to give form to the calm. Wherever Jesus went he must have carried courage and calm."¹ In some cases, the parables of Jesus, the writer believes, have been recorded as actual occurrences.

The conclusions reached in a study of the miracles are, in almost every case, purely personal, and often reflect merely the mental temperament of the investigator. If Jesus were not only the Messiah but, in a special sense, divine, as we concluded in the preceding study, then, of course, he would work miracles, says some one. If such a belief is necessary for you in order to have a satisfying faith, then hold to the belief in the literal interpretation of the miracles, realizing, however, that such a belief is not essential to the acceptance of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Many believe in the miracles only because Jesus was divine. They do not believe Jesus was divine because of the miracles. Take the question of the virgin birth, for instance. Jesus revealed God to us by His character and His teachings and not by His physical body. If He had been born miraculously of a virgin and had then committed sin, He would not have been the Son of God. It makes no difference as to the origin of His physical body. It is the origin of His spiritual life, it is the source of His insight into human hearts, it is the spring from which flowed the depth of His love that we wish to know about. We reached the conclusion in the last study that Jesus was in a

¹ *The Biblical World*, The University of Chicago Press. Used by permission.

special sense divine, yet such a conclusion was reached without discussing any of the miracles except the resurrection. If, however, it is satisfying for you to believe in the virgin birth, and the literal interpretation of the other miracles, then believe in them, realizing their subordinate place.

Study XV. Third Day

The Church

Lest some readers of this course be misled by the recurring statements that church membership, worship, ritual, and creeds are the husks of religion, it was decided to devote the thought of this last day to the value of the church and its service.

The church is the organization of Christian men and women for the development of Christian character and the nurture of Christian life. It is the gymnasium of the soul, where the spiritual muscles are developed and trained for Christian service. In its worship, we find opportunity to express our inward longings after God and to cultivate communion with the Father. In its outreach for men, we find opportunity to develop our lives in unselfish service. Its exercises prevent moral atrophy and spiritual degeneration. Its cross-crowned spires ever point us to Him who was lifted up that all men might be drawn unto Him.

The church is indispensable in keeping alive our spiritual life. A man must worship, he must serve, in order really to live. In the church, he is constantly stimulated to nobler service and the ideals represented by the Cross of Christ are kept ever before him. In it, a man receives the inspiration of fellowship with others of similar purpose and hopes. In it, and through it, a man finds many opportunities to serve mankind. By identification with it, a man publicly commits himself to a Christlike life and is thereby held steady many times in the face of severe temptations to which, otherwise, he would yield.

The church may be only the husk of religion but the husk is absolutely necessary for the protection and life of the in-

ward grain. Mistakes it has indeed made, because its membership is only human. It has made the world better, too, because its inspiration is divine. It has been the bulwark of society against the inroads of immoral and destructive cults. Its money has been the financial framework and its members the flesh and sinews of the philanthropic and charitable work of the world. In its membership is the logical place for every sincere follower of Jesus of Nazareth.

Conclusion

We have finished this brief survey of the life of Jesus, the Christ. We have sought only a minimum of belief but have endeavored to find at least a solid basis upon which each can build a reasonable faith for himself. Perhaps, the views of the writer will change as time goes on, for "we reach truth only by continual adjustments to new light." Whatever you believe or do not believe, follow Jesus Christ.

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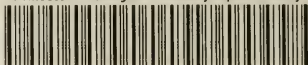
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